

The Communist Party and War Communism in Moscow, 1918-1921

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## SYNOPSIS

The thesis is divided into ten chapters and 3 parts.

Following an introductory chapter on the literature on the main issues of the period, Part I opens with a chapter on the social and economic transformation of the city of Moscow during war communism, and its second chapter analyses the role of the trade unions and the pattern of labour relations in this period.

Part II is concerned with the internal transformation of the party and the development of its relationship with society; and discusses recruitment, organisation, the nature of militarisation during the civil war, the party's ideological work, and its relationship to mass bodies. It ends with a study of the Moscow soviet and the development of bureaucracy. In Part III the debates at the end of war communism are considered in the light of the foregoing economic and political developments. The conclusion assesses the nature of war communism in Moscow.

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## GLOSSARY OF RUSSIAN TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

In the text:

ChON	<u>Chasti osobogo naznacheniya</u> (special purpose party units)
<u>Glavpolitprosvet</u>	<u>Glavnoe politicheskoe upravlenie prosveshchenii</u> (Chief Administration for Political Education under Narkompros)
<u>Glavpolitput'</u>	<u>Glavnoe politicheskoe upravlenie putei soobsheniya</u> (Chief Political Commissariat under <u>Narkomput'</u> )
<u>Gubkom</u>	<u>Gubernskii komitet</u> (Guberniya Committee of the party)
<u>Ispolkom</u>	<u>Ispolnitel'nyi komitet</u> (Executive Committee of the soviets)
MGSNKh	<u>Moskovskii gubernskii (gorodskoi) sovet narodnogo khozyaistva</u> (Moscow Guberniya (City) Council of the Economy)
M(G)SPS	<u>Moskovskii (gubernskii) sovet professional'nykh soyuzov</u> (Moscow (guberniya) Trade Union Council)
MK	<u>Moskovskii komitet</u> (Moscow Committee of the party)
MOB(K)	<u>Moskovskoe oblastnoe byuro (komitet)</u> (Moscow Oblast Bureau (Committee) of the party)
MOK (MGK)	<u>Moskovskii okruzhnoi komitetet</u> (Moscow Guberniya Committee of the party)
MOSNK	<u>Moskovskii oblastnoi sovet narodnykh komissarov</u> (Moscow Oblast Council of People's Commissars)
MOSNKh	<u>Moskovskii oblastnoi sovet narodnogo khozyaistva</u> (Moscow Oblast Council of the Economy)
MPO	<u>Moskovskaya partiinaya organizatsiya</u> (Moscow Party Organisation)
MRC	Military Revolutionary Committee
MREK	<u>Moskovskii raionnyi ekonomicheskii komitet</u> (Moscow Raion Economic Committee)

MVO	<u>Moskovskii voennyi okrug</u> (Moscow Military District)
<u>Narkomprod</u>	<u>Narodnyi komissariat prodovol'stviya</u> (People's Commissariat of Supply)
<u>Narkompros</u>	<u>Narodnyi komissariat prosveshcheniya</u> (People's Commissariat of Education)
<u>Narkomput'</u>	<u>Narodnyi komissariat putei soobshcheniya</u> (People's Commissariat of Transport)
NEP	<u>Novaya ekonomicheskaya politika</u> (New Economic Policy)
PUR RVSR	<u>Politicheskoe upravleniye revvoensoveta respubliki</u> (Political Department of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic)
Rabkrin (RKI)	<u>Narodnyi komissariat raboche-krest'yanskoi inspektsii</u> (People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasant's Inspection)
RK	<u>Raionnyi komitet</u> (Raion Committee of the party)
RKP(b)	<u>Rossiiskaya kommunisticheskaya partiya (bol'shevikov)</u> (Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks))
RKSM	<u>Rossiiskii kommunisticheskii soyuz molodezhi - Komsomol</u> (Russian Communist League of Youth)
RPO	<u>Raionnaya partiinaya organizatsiya</u> (Raion Party Organisation)
<u>Tsektran</u>	Central Committee of Rail and Water Workers' Trade Union
TsK	<u>Tsentral'nyi komitet</u> (Central Committee of the party)
Vecheka (MChK)	<u>Vserossiiskaya chrezvychainnaya komissiya</u> (All-Russian (Moscow) Commission for the Struggle against Counter-Revolution, Sabotage and Speculation)
VSNKh	<u>Vserossiiskii sovet narodnogo khozyaistva</u> (All-Russian Council of the Economy)
VTsIK	<u>Vserossiiskii tsentral'nyi ispolnitel'nyi komitet</u> (All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets)
VTsSPS	<u>Vserossiiskii tsentral'nyi sovet profsoyuzov</u> (All-Russian Central Council of the Trade Unions)

In the notes:

<u>KM</u>	<u>Krasnaya Moskva: sbornik statei</u> , M. 1920.
<u>KT</u>	<u>Kommunisticheskii trud</u> .
<u>P</u>	<u>Pravda</u> .
<u>PR</u>	<u>Proletarskaya revolyutsiya</u> .
<u>PSS</u>	<u>Polnoe sobranie sochinenii</u> .
<u>SV</u>	<u>Sotsialisticheskii vestnik</u> .
<u>TsGAOR</u>	<u>Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii</u> . In archival citations the name is followed by number of fond/opis'/edinit'sa khraneniya/list number.
<u>VI KPSS</u>	<u>Voprosy istorii KPSS</u> .
<u>VIMS</u>	<u>Vechernie izvestiya Moskovskogo soveta</u> .

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Dates:

All dates up to and including 31 January 1918 are according to the Julian calendar; then there is a gap of 13 days and then all dates from 14 February 1918 are according to the new style Gregorian calendar.

Weights:

1 pood = c.36 lbs = c.16.5 kgs

1 funt = 1/40th pood = 0.41 kgs

Territorial divisions:

Oblast'	Region
Guberniya	County
Raion	Urban borough
Uezd	Rural administrative division
Uchastok	Ward

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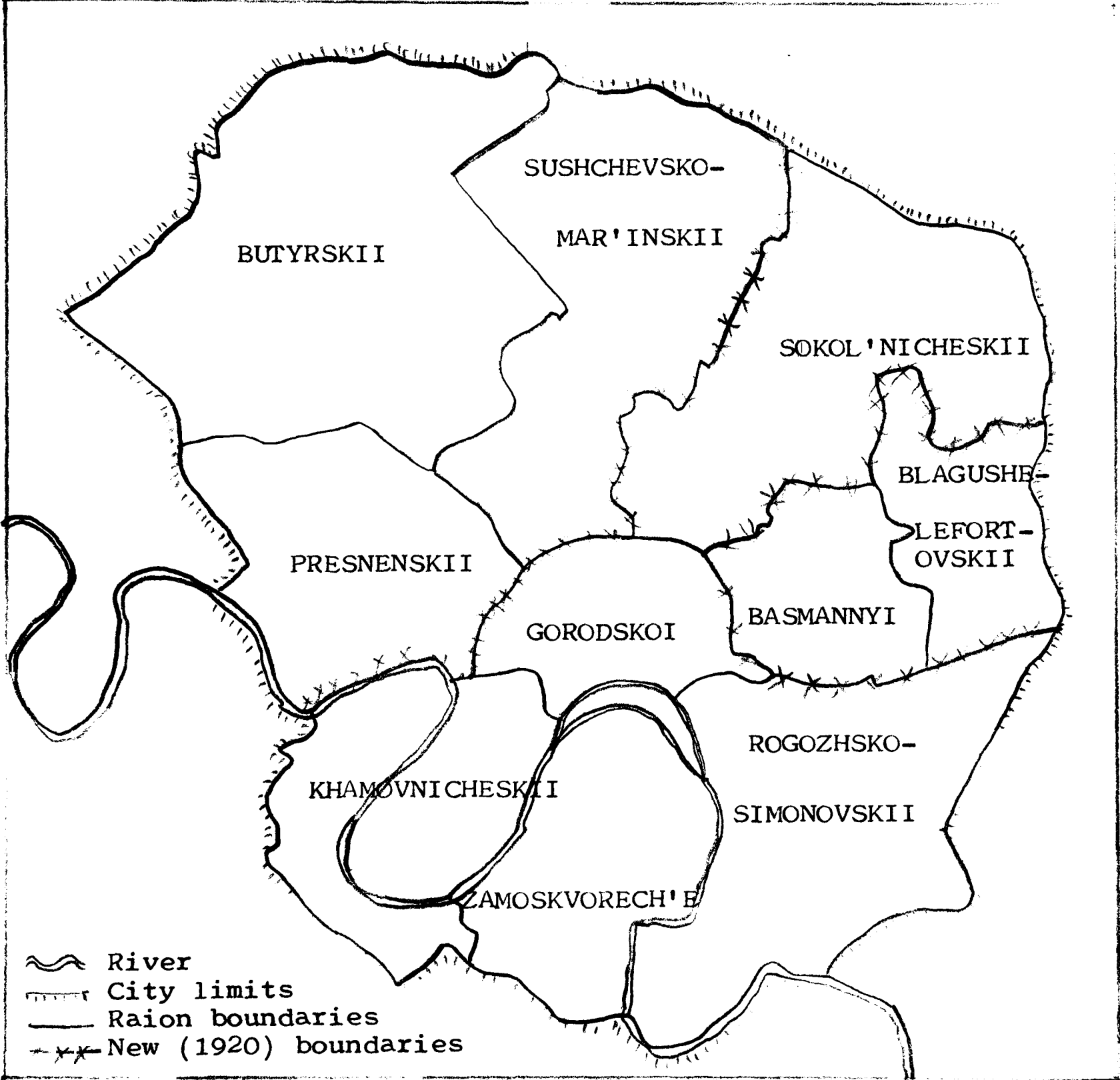
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The Raions of Moscow



## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

On 2 November 1917 the Moscow Bolsheviks and their allies on the Military Revolutionary Committee gained control of the city after 8 days of sporadic but often savage fighting against the defenders of the Provisional Government. The victors came to power with neither a detailed blueprint of the forms that their power would take nor of the speed or scale of the social and economic transformation that would accompany the general aim of establishing some form of socialism in Russia. Other than providing some broad economic guidelines, such as the abolition of commodity production and of wages, and in the political sphere calling for a stateless society, Marx and his followers had been loath to provide such a plan, and thus it was left to the Bolsheviks, the executors of the first successful socialist revolution, to work out in the most unpropitious circumstances the meaning of socialism in practice.

The question was not so much one of Marxist theory as of tactics. The period up to the beginning of the civil war in mid-1918 was marked by the consolidation of Bolshevik power, legitimised by their dominance in the soviets, and saw the other parties circumscribed in their activities and possible sources of institutional opposition, such as the dumas, eliminated. At the same time the initial 'Red Guard attack against capital' following October 1917, aimed at neutralising capitalist opposition, after the Brest-Litovsk peace of March 1918 gave way to the compromise of the state capitalist breathing space period. This stage ended with the beginning of general, if at this point

formal, nationalisation of all large plant by the decree of 28 June 1918.

Whereas after the Brest-Litovsk peace Lenin had envisaged a fairly long, if unspecified, period in which socialism (the state) and capitalism (industry) would coexist to allow the development of industry, the supply crisis and the onset of the civil war accelerated the elimination of capitalist economic relations and forced the introduction of a new system. What had begun as a series of measures in response to specific circumstances on the morrow of the revolution, though the circumstances themselves were provoked by the type of policies implemented by the Bolsheviki, was extended during the civil war to cover all of social, political and economic life in a system that later became known as war communism.

It was in this period that the majority of what are now the familiar elements of Soviet-type systems were introduced, including the first rudimentary exercises in planning. The reasons for their introduction and their manner of operation are therefore a crucial aspect of any attempt to understand the development of the Soviet system. The traditional view is that war communism was 'a compound of war emergency and socialist dogmatism'.<sup>1</sup> The problem remains, however, to evaluate how far war communism was a coherent if forced application of traditional socialist precepts, above all aimed at the elimination of commodity production and alienating capitalist relations,<sup>2</sup> or how

1. W.H. Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution 1917-1921, vol.2, London 1938, p.96.

2. The view held, for example, by Paul C Roberts, '"War Communism" A Re-examination', Slavic Review, June 1970, pp.238-261.

far it was, as Maurice Dobb and the standard Soviet interpretations since the 1930s put it, 'an improvisation in face of economic scarcity and military urgency in conditions of exhausting civil war'.<sup>3</sup>

This study will seek to show that war communism was more than an economic system, whether introduced as a pragmatic response to circumstances or as a dogmatic exercise in socialist fundamentalism, but a complex system of economic and political relationships which together created a novel social formation. Changes in the economic system affected the organisation of labour, which in turn altered the working class's relationship with the state and the communist party. Ultimately the state and the party developed as a bodies beyond the control of social forces. The civil war and foreign intervention acted as the catalyst hastening the formation of this new system.

The socialist revolution had been victorious in a country where the leaders of the revolution perceived the absence of the economic foundations to support that victory. Hence the tension between the attempt to build socialism and the need, in their view, to create the preconditions for that attempt. It is this tension which is sometimes seen as a conflict between ideology and pragmatism. Serge Mallet writes that in the first phase of socialist industrialisation 'The bureaucracy was occupied with

3. Maurice Dobb, Soviet Economic Development Since 1917, London 1948, p.122. The literature on the ideological and economic aspects of war communism has been reviewed by Roberts, op.cit., and by Sylvana Malle, The Economic Organisation of War Communism, 1918-1921, manuscript of book to be published by CUP.

the organisation of scarcity'.<sup>4</sup> The scarcity for the regime during the civil war was not confined to the economy but included human and cultural resources. The result in the economy was centralisation and the coercion of the working class and the peasantry, and in the party the concentration of authority in a small group at the apex of the party committee structure. We shall look at the literature on the economic and political aspects of war communism in turn.

#### 1. The economic system of war communism

War communism was characterised by its concentration on the central task of winning the civil war. To this end production and distribution were bureaucratically centralised, military methods were applied in labour relations, and a punitive system of grain expropriation was imposed on the peasantry to feed the starving cities and the army. Commodity and money relations were pushed to the margins as economic life became 'naturalised'. It was, as Moshe Lewin put it, a 'harsh rationing system',<sup>5</sup> which could not provide adequate material incentives and hence relied on revolutionary enthusiasm backed up by coercion.

The common interpretation of events following the revolution has been summarised by Szamuely:

(a) Immediately after the October Revolution, i.e., in the spring of 1918, the Bolshevik Party intended to build socialism in conformity with the principles of NEP; (b) This was hindered, or rather interrupted, by

4. Serge Mallet, Bureaucracy and Technocracy in the Socialist Countries, Spokesman Books, London 1974, p.34.

5. Moshe Lewin, Political Undercurrents in Soviet Economic Debates, Pluto Press, London 1975, p.77.

the civil war and foreign military intervention; (c) Thus War Communism is nothing else but war economy resorted to under the pressure of random coincidence, as it were, of historical circumstances; (d) It was abolished as soon as the civil war was terminated.<sup>6</sup>

This view can be criticised from three aspects. Firstly, the extent to which aspects of war communism were already implemented in the period immediately following the revolution, and before the full development of the civil war. Both Medvedev and Szamuely argue that looked at in ideological terms there was little to differentiate the 'breathing space' period (April-May 1918) from the war communism that followed. Medvedev points to specific policies that anticipated the later period, such as supply policy and state intervention in industry.<sup>7</sup> Szamuely points out that Lenin's theoretical conception of the state capitalist period was in harmony with war communist ideology, but differed only in its practical application.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the breathing space period had little in common with NEP, and to its protagonists war communism was both an ideologically desirable state of affairs and increasingly a necessary practical solution to the mounting problems facing them.

The second line of criticism against the schema presented above is that participants in the great drama of war communism were convinced that it represented not only a move in the direction of communism, but that it was the direct implementation of communism. Lenin's vigorous defence of war

6. László Szamuely, First Models of the Socialist Systems: Principles and Theories, Budapest 1974, p.8.

7. Roy Medvedev, The October Revolution, Constable, London 1979, pp.117-31.

8. Szamuely, pp.46-62.

communism at the time requires no comment. The most notable analysis of war communism during its brief existence was Bukharin's Ekonomika perekhodnogo perioda (Economics of the Transitional Period), published in May 1920. The work essentially argued that in the transition to socialism not only the economic readiness of a country should be taken into account but also the human and political maturity of that country. In other words, the socialist state, not eschewing coercion against the old order and in its own labour process, could create the conditions for the 'building of socialism'.<sup>9</sup> Marx's economic categories are rejected and in their place a political gnosis is employed in which the party itself creates the new social relations.<sup>10</sup> The work therefore illustrates the 'economistic deviation of Marxism' wherein the social relations of production are subordinated to the development of the productive forces themselves.<sup>11</sup> Arguing on the basis of the circumstances of the time Bukharin, and with him Trotsky, developed a strategy based on coercion which provided a model for the later development of industry. Put another way, war communism was not so much a response to exogenous circumstances as a specific programme for the introduction of socialism in which, as Szamuely points out, every one of its traits had its own theoretical background.<sup>12</sup>

9. Stephen F. Cohen, Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888-1938, Vintage Books, New York 1975, pp.90-5.

10. Malle, p.7.

11. Malle, p.5. This indeed was the classic Stalinist view, discussed by Charles Bettelheim, Class Struggles in the USSR: First Period, 1917-1923, Harvester Press, 1976, pp.20-9.

12. Szamuely, p.44.



The third point against the above schema centres on the circumstances of the introduction of NEP. As Szamuely has hinted, if Lenin defined NEP as a 'retreat', as a 'concession to the peasantry', and that it would 'last long but not forever', then what was the presumed economic model against which the 'retreat' was measured if not war communism?<sup>13</sup> In his pamphlet 'The Tax in Kind' (21 April 1921) Lenin argued that war communism had been forced by 'war and ruin' and had only been a 'temporary measure'.<sup>14</sup> This came after widespread disturbances in the country and months of bitter conflict in the party over democracy and the trade unions, and at the X party congress held a few weeks earlier Lenin had flayed the oppositions. Malle comments on his position thus:

Through this politically brilliant 'composition of opposites', Lenin was able to strike simultaneously at the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Kautskyists, and at the Workers' Opposition, against which most of his efforts were directed at the party congress. If war communism had been necessary, it could not be mistaken. Vice-versa, if mistakes had been made in the choice of policies, the effective policies were not necessary, but on the contrary, perverse. Lenin laid the foundations for both interpretations of war communism.<sup>15</sup>

Lenin's interpretation of war communism at the VII Moscow guberniya party conference in October 1921 argued that it had been an attempt to achieve socialism by the quickest possible route forced by the 'logic of the struggle', and that it had failed, and this is crucial, because

13. Szamuely, p.8.

14. V.I. Lenin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii (PSS), 5th ed, vol.43, p.220.

15. Malle, p.15.

The political situation in spring 1921 showed us that on a range of economic questions we had to retreat to a position of state capitalism, to shift from 'storming' to a position of 'siege'.<sup>16</sup>

In other words, the aims of war communism had been correct but the methods employed to achieve them had to be adjusted when faced with the political, and not so much the economic, crisis of spring 1921.

In all important respects, then, the schema presented above is inaccurate. War communism had strong ideological underpinnings and in many ways represented, to contemporary and to later Bolsheviks, a viable pattern of development. Nevertheless, Lenin's contradictory evaluation of war communism has stimulated a debate that continues to the present day.

One of the first attempts to rehabilitate war communism from Lenin's critique was carried out by Kritsman. His defensive account of the period emphasised the positive programme aimed at eliminating commodity production on the basis of several overriding principles: class exclusivity, the labour principle enacted through the obligation to work, the collective principle expressed through collegiality, and the principle of rationality which was to sweep away the old fetishistic relations.<sup>17</sup> While exalting war communism as an expression of the immanent tendencies of the proletarian revolution, which in the period 1918-20 led to the formation of what he called the proletarian-natural economic structure, Kritsman had no illusions about the

16. Lenin PSS, vol.44, p.204.

17. L. Kritsman, Geroicheskiei period velikoi russkoi revolyutsii: opyt analiza t.n. "voennogo kommunizma", M/L. 1926, pp.82-4.

actual practice of the system. The transformation took place, he argued, on a basis unprepared by capitalist development and using unsuitable materials (petty-bourgeois and small capitalist forms) leading to the inevitable deformation of the proletarian-natural economy, such as its split into a legal and an illegal part and the growth of bureaucracy (Chs.VII and VIII). In sum, he argued,

It is easy to see the period 1918-20, war communism, not as the transition to socialism but as the organisation of the 'rear', not the organisation of socialism but as the organisation of the war, i.e., the simulation of the transition to socialism.<sup>18</sup>

Kritsman has therefore been able to transcend the rather sterile debate over the supposed opposition between ideology and expediency in the development of war communism: it was both. The immanent tendencies of the October revolution were revealed by the civil war, which caused the deformation of the proletarian revolution beyond what was economically feasible (as Lenin had recognised during the breathing space period) in order to destroy the internal sources of strength of the counter-revolution.<sup>19</sup> The civil war only hastened the development of what was implicit in the very act of the Bolshevik seizure of power. His account therefore contains some of Lenin's contradictory evaluations of war communism, but stresses its necessity in the circumstances.

While recent Soviet historical writing has avoided some of the more dogmatic assertions of Stalinist historiography on the random nature of war communism, there is still a tendency to regard it as an aberration coming between the proto-NEP of early 1918 and the NEP itself, and forced by war alone. The question then arises that if this was indeed the case, then why was the

18. Kritsman, p.71.

19. loc.cit.

opportunity afforded by the breathing space of the first months of 1920, after the victories over Kolchak and Denikin, not used to relax war communist policies, but instead saw their intensification and the militarisation of labour? Gimpel'son argues that the military situation was still unclear, and that some of the more fantastic notions for the intensification of war communism, such as the expropriation of the kulaks raised at the IX party congress in March, were in fact rejected.<sup>20</sup> This does not answer the question of why no serious attempt was made to review the aptness of war communist policies, for example, in relation to the grain requisitioning policies.

On this point Szamuely is clear:

Thus, the war economy of the civil war years brought about a momentary correspondence between the earlier theoretical assumptions about socialist economy and the everyday requirements of practice, while the military victory over the enemies proved that the methods of economic organisation had been correct and purposeful - and it seemed that the theory also had stood the test. It is accordingly not surprising that after the conclusion of the civil war Lenin - together with the other leaders of the Bolshevik party - should have wished to utilise the methods and institutions found and tested during the war for the peaceful construction of socialism.<sup>21</sup>

It was to take further economic collapse and worker and peasant insurgency, together with dangerous conflict within the party, before the need for NEP became 'self-evident'. Instead, war communism was intensified at home and attempts were made to link the Russian economy with the relatively advanced German economy

20. E.G. Gimpel'son, "Voennyyi kommunizm": politika, praktika, ideologiya, M. 1973, pp.191-2.

21. Szamuely, p.65.

by waging a 'revolutionary war' to seize the Polish bridge.<sup>22</sup> As Chamberlin put it, the closing stages of war communism were marked by an increasing miasma of 'bureaucratic unreality' as ever more grandiose ideas, such as the integrated economic plan, were mooted in ever more miserable circumstances.<sup>23</sup> While the key to the debate between ideology and pragmatism, as Sheila Fitzpatrick points out, lies in differing conceptions of how quickly the Bolsheviki could move towards communism,<sup>24</sup> and naturally clothed their understanding in suitable ideological garments, once the NEP 'retreat' had been decided these garbs had to be suitably laundered.

The key component of the economic system of war communism was glavkism, the strict centralisation of economic management on vertical lines, or as Sapronov put it, in pillars. Though the glavki began to be formed before war communism, and were weakened already by the end of 1920 though some survived as a system of management later, their identification with war communism is correct because, as Gimpel'son put it, what is meant by glavkism is the 'hypertrophy of centralised management'.<sup>25</sup> For Gimpel'son they were a function of the war and therefore he rejects Kritsman's argument that they were, however imperfectly, a 'breakthrough of the future into the present',<sup>26</sup> on the grounds

22. Norman Davies, 'The Missing Revolutionary War', Soviet Studies, XXVII, 2, April 1975, p.179.

23. Chamberlin, p.296.

24. Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, OUP 1982, p.71.

25. E.G. Gimpel'son, Velikii oktyabr' i stanovlenie sovetskoi sistemy upravleniya narodnym khozyaistvom, M. 1977, p.68.

26. Kritsman, p.75.

that this betrays a lack of understanding of their specific historical location.<sup>27</sup>

Gimpel'son's view, however, neglects the broader political implications of glavkism in particular and the ideological input of war communism in general which Kritsman, for all his shortcomings, attempted to integrate into a general analysis of the period. In his 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' Marx had dismissed the idea that the succesful proletarian revolution could immediately embark on the creation of the 'people's state', on the grounds that the bourgeois state had its roots in capitalist production which could not be abolished at a stroke. Instead, he argued,

...Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transformation period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>28</sup>

The bourgeois state was rooted in economic exploitation, and hence, according to Lenin in 'State and Revolution', the bourgeois state is abolished after the revolution, but the proletarian state would only wither away in proportion to the disappearance of capitalism.<sup>29</sup> During the breathing space period the bourgeois state was destroyed and a new one created, but it was only during war communism that it set upon the task of eliminating capitalism in its entirety, and this it achieved by the massive consolidation of state power, epitomised in its

27. Gimpel'son (1977), p.69.

28. Quoted in 'State and Revolution', Lenin PSS, vol.33, p.86.

29. Lenin, PSS, vol.33, p.91.

economic aspect by the development of glavki. Just as the bourgeois state was rooted in economic reality, so the socialist state expanded as a measure of the increasingly ambitious economic tasks it set itself.

The civil war provoked the integration of the theory of the transitional period with the practice of of Bolshevik power in the system of war communism. Glavkism and one-man management, the centralised economy and the militarised labour process, all underlay the economic functions of the state in the dictatorship of the proletariat, but at the same time it had a profound effect on the political organisation of the state. By concentrating on the economic structure of war communism, and the associated debates over the relationship to the peasantry, wages policy, management, and over the very essence of the nature of the transitional period, the implications of the political system of war communism are often under-rated. War communism was a fusion of economic and political practice in which the role of the state was intensified, but within that state the party became supreme. The war and the elimination of capitalism required the development of a massive state apparatus, but it was the party that gave the state order and direction. The dictatorship of the proletariat became transformed into the dictatorship of the party.

## 2. The political system of war communism

A debate over the nature of the changes that took place in the party during the civil war has taken place in parallel to, and usually in isolation from, the debate over the nature of the economic policy of war communism. Many of the same issues have

been raised: the role of ideology and specifically the influence of Lenin's organisational precepts launched in his 1902 pamphlet 'What is to be Done?'; the weight to be attached to exogenous factors such as the civil war in determining the changes in this period; and the extent of the change between the party of 1917 compared to that of 1921. The major difference colouring the various interpretations is that whereas in the economy a major break took place in early 1921, in the party not only were civil war party organisational methods not discarded, but were on the contrary intensified. A central question therefore is, why was a NEP introduced but the old political policy retained?

Robert Service has described the changes in the party between 1917 and 1922 as an 'internal metamorphosis'.<sup>30</sup> Explanations for this metamorphosis have been sought in processes internal to the party: its organisational principles, its totalistic ideology, and the application of general sociological laws (especially those formulated by Robert Michels and Max Weber) of functional differentiation found in all large bureaucratic organisations in modern industrial societies. Others have stressed the 'external' factors such as the international situation (above all the lack of a successful revolution in Western Europe), Russia's bureaucratic and authoritarian heritage in a peasant society, and the ambitious tasks the party set itself in a culturally and economically backward country. In this vein a recent article has argued that

30. Robert Service, The Bolshevik Party in Revolution 1917-1923: A Study in Organisational Change, Macmillan 1979, p.3.



...The nature of the revolution and the civil war, not Leninist theory and pre-revolutionary experiences, were decisive forces in the creation of the party machine by 1921.<sup>31</sup>

Such an approach raises a series of questions on why, out of various responses, particular policies were adopted at specific times and not others. Ideology, if not always Leninist theory, as we shall see, constantly impinged on the choices made at various points of the civil war. This line also fails to establish a relationship between the economic revolution and the political consolidation.

In his interpretation of the period E.H. Carr has looked at economic changes in isolation from changes within the party. For him war communism was 'the product of a special emergency, and lacked a sufficiently solid social and economic basis to ensure its full survival...'<sup>32</sup> This was indeed the case, but the whole problem was that by early 1921 its political basis had been undermined. As for the political changes, his stress lies on the application of Michels's 'iron law of oligarchy' to the party, exacerbated by circumstances, but not 'peculiarly Russian or peculiarly Bolshevik'.<sup>33</sup>

A very different interpretation is proposed by Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, who has written a political history of the Bolshevik

31. Jonathan R. Adelman, 'The Development of the Soviet Party Apparatus in the Civil War: Center, Localities and Nationality Areas', Russian History/Histoire Russe, 9, pt 1, 1982, p.87. The main positions on these questions have been summarised by Service, pp.4-7.

32. E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution: 1917-1923, vol.2, Pelican 1966, p.270.

33. E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution: 1917-1923, vol.1, Pelican 1966, p.192.

party. In his view the party established its dictatorship over the working class and society soon after the October revolution. This dictatorship was not of the party as a whole, though, but of its Central Committee (TsK), then the Politburo and the Secretariat, but above all the group around Lenin and finally of Stalin himself. In short, he describes the technology of power and the development of the central party apparatus. His work, based largely on the materials of the party congresses during the civil war, does not have much to say on the social and economic conditions that made possible the development of this power, nor does he analyse the conditions within the party that facilitated the rise to power of this group.<sup>34</sup>

Both Daniels and Schapiro have written works that look at the civil war developments in the party from the point of view of the oppositions. Daniels admits that late 1920 was the high point of 'Communist liberalism' in the party, and that the reform movement achieved significant strength and some gains in its attempts to overcome some of the worst aspects of centralisation imposed during the war. With Avtorkhanov, he argues that the party leadership and Lenin himself had specific objectives of their own - 'to maintain a firm hold of the party machinery'.<sup>35</sup> A similar view is taken by Schapiro, and he recognised the importance of war communism, as distinct from the civil war, as the key to the victory of the party machine:

34. A. Avtorkhanov, Proiskhozhdenie partokratii, vol.1, TsK i Lenin, Posev, Frankfurt 1973.

35. R.V. Daniels, The Conscience of the Revolution: Communist Opposition in Soviet Russia, London 1960, pp.117-8.

Though 'war communism' failed as a system of organising national economy, it helped lay the foundations for the dictatorship of the communist bureaucracy which was designed to replace the old machinery of state.<sup>36</sup>

Several recent studies have confirmed that in 1917 the Bolshevik party was not the monolithic, disciplined, party of later myth,<sup>37</sup> even though it must be stressed that the Bolshevik party was still incomparably better organised than its rivals. All the factors mentioned above certainly played their part in realising the myth by the early 1920s, but the bases of the contrast should be examined.

Neil Harding points out that after October 1917 the notion of democratic centralism, hitherto restricted to the party, was extended to the rest of society.<sup>38</sup> This left the role of the party unclear since once it had organised the revolution its functions were now in theory to be carried out by the proletariat as a whole.<sup>39</sup> In the first six months after the revolution the party faded into the background as the enormous project of the destruction of the bourgeois state and its replacement by soviet forms went ahead. The bourgeois state was smashed and in its place a massive new state was established, and at first it was not the state but the party itself that was in danger of

36. Leonard Schapiro, The Origin of the Communist Autocracy: Political Opposition in the Soviet State 1917-22, London 1955, p.217.

37. This has been shown by Service, ch.2, for the country as a whole; Alexander Rabinowich, The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd, New York 1976, for Petrograd; and B'Ann Bowman, The Moscow Bolsheviks, February - November 1917, PhD dissertation, Indiana, 1973, for Moscow.

38. Neil Harding, Lenin's Political Thought, vol.2, Theory and Practice in the Socialist Revolution, Macmillan 1981, p.175.

39. ibid., p.177.

withering away. The party poured its members into the new state structures, the party leaders became the leaders of the new state, but up to mid-1918 there remained the unresolved problem of its role in the new state system. Preobrazhenskii allegedly even went so far as to suggest that the party could be disbanded since it duplicated the structure of the proletarian state.<sup>40</sup>

By March-April 1918, with the revolution still confined to one country, Lenin's thoughts increasingly stressed the dictatorship of the proletariat concept over commune forms. This expressed itself, as Harding writes, in the debates over 'workers' control and one-man management...between the trade unions and the Supreme Economic Council...between the Council of People's Commissars and the soviets'.<sup>41</sup> The self-activity of the workers and peasants was gradually replaced by centralised power and authoritarian command structures with the masses relegated to the role of 'checkers'. Social and political circumstances thus led Lenin towards envisaging the dictatorship of the proletariat as a transitional phase suitable to the alignment of class and international forces until commune forms could come into their own. Central to the new analysis was the enhanced administrative role of the party as the only force cohesive enough in the transitional period to ensure the execution of the socialist programme. By mid-1918 the working class as a whole had proved itself incapable, Lenin argued, of managing the country on its own.<sup>42</sup> The relationship of the party to the new state, however, remained undefined.

40. Bettelheim, p.302. No source is given for this claim.

41. Harding, p.187.

42. ibid., p.196.

The extent to which commune forms were introduced after October 1917 is debatable, but the main point is valid. The beginning of the civil war coincided with a reappraisal of the role of the communist party in the Soviet state. As part of this process the internal organisation of the party was improved and its leading role in the state confirmed. Under the impetus of the transition to war communism the 'withering away of the party' was halted, and in parallel with the economic revolution a new model party was forged which drew its ideological inspiration partly from pre-revolutionary ideas developed by Lenin and briefly neglected in the first flush of revolution, and partly from the organisational requirements of war communism itself.

The party in 1917, emerging from the underground into a multi-party competitive environment and with different objectives than those of a ruling party, could not but have organised and behaved differently than later. When faced with dominance over state power, however, an underlying unity is revealed between the earlier and later stages.<sup>43</sup> The responses include: no organisational unity or alliances with other parties or groups without Bolshevik supremacy; Bolshevik fractions owing primary allegiance to the party and not to the organisation in which they worked (soviets, trade unions, Komsomol, etc.,); the principle of individual party member allegiance and subordination

43. Just as there were in the responses in the economic sphere even before the war stimulated the creation of the full-blown war communist economy. As Malle puts it: 'There were certain constraints, like the centralisation of economic decisions, collective commodity exchange, the incapacity to make use of financial means of control, which preceded the major involvement in war and prepared some further economic developments', Malle, p.22.

to the party above all else; hierarchical command structures designated by the term democratic centralism. At the same time in society, just as commodity relations were extirpated during war communism, so were 'islands of separatism' eliminated and the one-party state established.<sup>44</sup>

Over these general principles there was a consensus amongst the majority in the party for the greater part of the war. But the way in which these principles were applied within the party aroused increasing opposition, and by 1920 the consensus broke down and various groups emerged with alternative organisational precepts. Democratic centralism was extended to the rest of society and at the same time it began to be interpreted increasingly restrictively within the party. Broadly speaking, the oppositions sought to establish institutional safeguards to allow each unit in the soviet state the exercise of its nominal prerogatives. The issues centred over the extent to which commune forms could be restored by allowing greater scope for the working class organised in trade unions or the soviets, for the rank and file party member in the party organisations, and in general the extent to which the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the sense of centralised party and state control, could be relaxed. The failure of the challenge in 1920-early 1921 marked the consolidation of war communist forms of party organisation which in essence remain to this day as the basis of Soviet-type systems.

44. Cf., Carl J. Friedrich, 'Evolving Theory and Practice' in Totalitarianism in Perspective: Three Views, London 1969, p.107.

This study will focus on the city of Moscow during the civil war and will aim to show how the processes described above developed in practice. The city can be seen as a microcosm of the changes that took place in the country at large, but because of its overwhelming importance as the seat of Bolshevik power it was also a crucible in which crucial processes for the rest of the country were developed. Here were concentrated the major industrial resources of Soviet power, the largest concentration of workers, and the biggest communist party organisation. The work will look at the development of the centralised Soviet state in its local context. Among the questions considered are the degree to which the war or the attempt to eliminate commodity relations enhanced the powers of the centralised state; the nature of the internal metamorphosis of the Moscow party; the definition of its relationship to society; and the failure of the reform movements in 1920-1. The basic questions posed are the nature of war communism, how it worked in practice, and the role of the party in the new system. The three parts broadly correspond to the social and economic changes and their results; the changes in the party and its role in society; and finally the political and ideological debates at the end of the period.

P A R T I

Society and Economy During the Civil War

After three years of war the Russian revolutions swept away first the autocracy, and then the bourgeois democratic Provisional Government, and it was to be three more years before peace was to return. At the price of heavy territorial and material losses Russia withdrew from the first world war in March 1918 through the peace of Brest-Litovsk. For a brief period a semblance of peace returned to the unhappy country, but by May 1918 war returned in its most terrible visage: civil war. The swiftness of the Bolshevik victory in October 1917 was now belied by two and a half years of vicious fighting in which the delayed resistance to the October revolution took the form of anti-Bolshevik armies in the field.

Following the revolt of the Czechoslovak legion in May 1918 anti-Bolshevik governments were established in Siberia and on the Volga, foreign forces escalated their activities in Murmansk, Arkhangel, Odessa, and Vladivostok; Denikin and his Volunteer army extended their territories in the south; while Kolchak in the East forged a powerful anti-Soviet army. A brief lull in the fighting in autumn 1918 gave way to the life and death struggles of 1919. Gradually the advantage turned in favour of the Bolsheviks as Yudenich's advance on Petrograd in summer 1919 was turned, Denikin's attack on Moscow reversed in November, and Kolchak's forces in Siberia dispersed in early 1920. With the defeat of Wrangel in the South in November 1920 and the signature of the Peace of Riga with Poland in that month the war was



largely over. The country lay ruined and exhausted. It was against this background that the centralised Russian Soviet state was reconstructed as a powerful instrument of military and internal coercion. The period coincided with massive social, economic and political changes that together created the system of war communism. The coincidence of war and the development of war communism would suggest that the one flowed logically from the other. In practice, the actual development of policies and their introduction had a greater autonomy than necessity forced by the exigencies of war.

## CHAPTER 2

### Population and Economy of Moscow

During the civil war Moscow's social and economic structure changed with unprecedented rapidity. The general circumstances of the time and Bolshevik policies together accelerated the collapse of the city's traditional economy and radically altered social relationships. The size and structure of the population and working class changed, and at the same time a centralised and bureaucratically administered economy emerged and with it an alter ego, the illegal economy.

#### 1. Urbanisation and deurbanisation

Moscow's population had grown rapidly after the 1861 peasant emancipation, nearly tripling in size from 394,000 in 1862 to 1,039,000 in 1897.<sup>1</sup> Between 1900 and 1910 the growth rate of the population at 3.5% per annum was the fastest of any city in the world, and in the next five years it accelerated to a massive 5.5% every year. By 1912 Moscow was the equal sixth largest city in the world (with St Petersburg) with a population of 1,617,700, which by early 1917 had peaked at 2,017,173 (Appendix 1).<sup>2</sup>

Moscow's growth was a classic case of urbanisation resulting

1. Statisticheskii spravochnik g. Moskvyy i Moskovskoi gubernii 1927g., M. 1928, p.24.

2. Krasnaya Moskva: sbornik statei (KM), M. 1920, cols.52-3. Moscow's importance as an urban centre can be seen from the fact that while in 1913 the city represented only 1.17% of the Russian empire's total population of 137.2 mln, it nevertheless contained 6.5% of the country's urban population of 24.7 mln, Izmeneniya sotsial'noi struktury sovetskogo obshchestva: oktyabr' 1917-1920, M. 1976, p.248.

from immigration stimulated by industrialisation. Urban development was encouraged by state-aided capitalist industrial expansion over half a century. By 1912 out of 165,184 industrial workers in the city 149,529 (90.5%) were immigrants, i.e., had been born outside the city.<sup>3</sup> The massive expansion of the city generated powerful social conflicts, which when combined with Russia's unsuccessful participation in the first world war led on to the revolutions of 1917. At the same time the ability of the municipal authorities to respond to the new circumstances was undermined by the Tsarist government.<sup>4</sup> During the civil war capitalist social conflict gave way to a profound social crisis in which the whole population shared. The problem became one of survival in the competition for a share of the meagre resources available. New patterns of privilege and authority became established which in turn stimulated a new terrain of political consciousness.

By 1920 Moscow's population had fallen below the 1897 level, with a 40.1% loss during the civil war alone. At the height of the war and the assault against commodity relations in 1919/20 nearly a quarter of Moscow's population left in a single year (Appendix 1).<sup>5</sup> The decrease was not distributed evenly

3. KM, col.170.

4. On urbanisation and municipal government, see Michael F. Hamm, 'The Breakdown of Urban Modernisation: A Prelude to the Revolutions of 1917', in The City in Russian History, Kentucky 1976, pp.182-195; and James H. Bater, 'Some Dimensions of Urbanisation and the Response of Municipal Government: Moscow and St Petersburg', Russian History/Histoire Russe, 5, pt.1, 1978, pp.46-63.

5. Between 21 April 1918 and 28 August 1920 the population decreased by 689,000, and by 1920 the population had decreased by

over the city, however, with the fall greatest in the working class suburbs, where it had fallen by up to a half, while in the middle class and bureaucratic centre there was little change.<sup>6</sup>

In an interview with H.G. Wells in late 1920 Lenin was even prepared to consider that the decline of the cities under communism would be allowed to continue.<sup>7</sup> The city had grown as a function of the development of capitalism, and the period of the destruction of capitalism was marked by the decline of the city. But the deurbanisation of the revolutionary period marked not only the collapse of the capitalist economy in particular but of the industrial economy in general. The villages took back the population that they had so recently given to the towns, and the urban-based Bolshevik party was faced with the erosion of its physical and ideological heartlands.

Some of the demographic effects of the wars are shown in Table I, overleaf. From the table it can be seen that the marriage rate fell at the beginning of the first war, but from 1917 began to rise steeply. The number of marriages had fallen from 10,000 in 1914 to 7500 each in 1915 and 1916, then risen to 9900 in 1917. In just the first half of 1919 alone there were nearly as many civil marriages (9359) as in all of 1917, which

49.1% since the February 1917 peak, Statisticheskii ezhegodnik g. Moskvyy i Moskovskoi gubernii, issue 2, 1914-1925, M. 1927, p.9.

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6. KT, 21 August, 22 October 1920. In Moscow guberniya the population had increased as the population of the city dispersed to the countryside, and in some uyezds the population rose by nearly 20%, KT, 22 October 1920.

7. H.G. Wells, Russia in the Shadows, London 1920, p.134; Sunday Express, 28 November 1920.

Table 1

Natural movement of Moscow city population, 1913-1921

(per 1000 population)

	Marriages	Divorces	Births	Deaths	Natural change	Deaths per 100 up to 1 yr old
1913	6.0	-	32.2	24.7	7.5	28.5
1914	5.5	-	31.0	23.2	7.8	27.9
1915	4.1	-	26.9	24.0	2.9	30.3
1916	3.9	-	22.9	23.0	-0.1	34.2
1917	5.4	-	19.6	23.7	-4.1	35.5
1918	7.5	2.1	14.8	29.9	-15.1	32.2
1919	17.4	3.4	17.4	45.4	-28.0	33.0
1920	19.1	3.7	21.4	36.3	-14.9	23.0
1921	16.9	5.1	30.7	25.5	5.1	24.8

Source: Stat. spravochnik, pp.12-13.

when the population fall is taken into account represented a 250% increase.<sup>8</sup> The change in the balance of the population in favour of women, the easier conditions of divorce, the introduction of simple civil marriage, delayed marriages from the first war, and perhaps the search for family security in a time of cataclysmic change, all led to this extraordinary marriage boom.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the civil war saw the divorce rate double (Table 1). Together with the rise in the marriage rate the the civil war saw a rise in the birth rate after the steady decline during the first war. The number of births fell from 54,000 in 1914 to 25,000 in 1918, and it remained at this level despite the declining population, leading to an increased birth rate. The demobilisation of 1918 and the high marriage rate played their part in this boom, but another factor was the campaign waged on

8. Vechernie izvestiya Moskovskogo soveta (VIMS), 3 September 1919.

9. In Petrograd the marriage rate reached the amazing level of 27.7 per thousand in 1920, O naselenii Moskvy, M. 1980, p.29.

health grounds from late 1918 against the enormous number of illegal abortions carried out by Moscow doctors.<sup>10</sup> Abortion itself was only legalised in November 1920.

One of the major factors driving the population from the city was the shortage of food. The recommended daily calorie intake for industrial workers was set at 3600, but at no time during the civil war was this achieved.<sup>11</sup> The daily consumption of bread by the average Muscovite fell from 648 gms in 1913 to 537 in 1916 and 422 in August 1919; meat consumption between 1913 and August 1919 fell dramatically from 615 to 59 gms a day; fish from 410 to 164 gms; fat intake halved between 1916 and 1919 from 31 to 15 gms; and potato consumption in 1919 was 348 gms a day. The workers' diet was reportedly worse than that of the soviet employee, and both these worse than that of a middle class person. In August 1919, for example, a worker consumed 373 gms of potatoes a day and 328 gms of bread, while the respective figures for the middle class were 389 and 480 gms. A worker received 37% of his bread by ration, and the bourgeois 29%, reflecting the greater dependence of the bourgeoisie on the market.<sup>12</sup> The periods of the worst food shortages in early to mid-1919 and early 1921 corresponded to periods of maximum worker

10. Vechernyaya krasnaya gazeta, 28 September 1918.

11. The consumption of the average worker in Moscow in terms of the total energy value of diet measured in calories consumed per person per day, with an indication of the quality of the diet shown by the amount of animal protein consumed, ranged from 2066 calories (29.2 gms of animal protein) in March 1919; 2554 (9.1) in July; 2791 (4.6) in December; 3430 (13.8) in May 1920; 2744 (7.5) in October; and 2411 (12.9) in April 1921, Steve Wheatcroft, University of Birmingham SIPS, 20, 1981, pp.13-14.

12. VIMS, 3 September 1919.

disturbances.

The lack of food encouraged large numbers to leave the city, and at the same time hunger weakened the resistance of those who remained against disease and cold. The death rate began to rise in 1918 and reached the catastrophic level of 45.4 per thousand in 1919,<sup>13</sup> and took a particularly heavy toll of infants and old people.<sup>14</sup> By the end of 1919 a worker took 19.2 days off work a year because of illness, compared to about 11 in 1917.<sup>15</sup> From late 1918 the city was struck by a typhus epidemic, and later by attacks of cholera. The renewed typhus epidemic at the end of 1919 had a particularly high mortality rate.<sup>16</sup> The average of 128 deaths a day in the city in 1918 rose to 170 in 1919, and in 1920 fell to 121,<sup>17</sup> though given the fall in the population this does not represent a significant fall.

Despite the decreased population the housing shortage in the city remained acute. Between 1918 and 1920 the number of living units (flats) fell from 231,485 to 189,811, a fall of 18% and a return to the 1910 level.<sup>18</sup> Many buildings were gutted to provide firewood, and the use of crude stoves and open grates provoked a massive number of fires, which in the winter of

13. In 1919 in Petrograd the death rate reached 77.1 per thousand, O Naselenii Moskvyy, p.29.

14. KM, col.74.

15. KM, col.186.

16. In October 1918 there were 357 cases of typhus in the city, in November 1009, in December 2482, and this epidemic peaked in March 1919 with 11,974 cases (500 of which were not Muscovites), VIMS, 3, 31 May, 11 November 1919.

17. KT, 25 October 1921.

18. Over the same period the number of empty flats increased from 5698 to 16,217: they had been rendered uninhabitable by the lack of maintenance and the search for fuel, KT, 22 October 1920.

1919-20 alone destroyed 850 buildings.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the burgeoning bureaucratic apparatus devoured living space as buildings were converted into offices, a particularly severe problem since the government move from Petrograd in March 1918. Therefore, despite the fall in population there was an acute housing crisis by 1921, exacerbated by the flood of people coming to the city to seek refuge from famine.<sup>20</sup>

During the civil war Moscow's age structure did not change significantly (Appendix 3), though the trend continued to redress the imbalance caused by the pre-war immigration of people of working age. Before the revolution Moscow had had a much more homogenously Russian population than Petrograd, but during the wars the city became more cosmopolitan as the proportion of national minorities increased, especially of Jews, and more Russians than others took part in the exodus to the countryside. By 1920 Russians comprised 84.8% of the population compared to 95.2% in 1921 (Appendix 2).

The pattern of urbanisation as a function of industrialisation is revealed in the preponderance of men over women in the population structure as the men came to work in the new factories. Hence the disproportion was most marked in the working age groups and levelled out in the under 10 and over 50 groups. The non-working class areas of the city had a more

19. KT, 18 March 1921.

20. In April 1920 3000 people officially arrived; in May 4600; and in June 7850, all asking for accomodation, (KT, 4 August 1920). On housing and other aspects of the social crisis see William John Chase, Moscow and its Working Class, 1918-1928: A Social Analysis, PhD Dissertation, Boston 1979, pp.39-47 and passim.



balanced structure since there were fewer newcomers from the countryside. The tendency for the sex ratios to equalise, as the families of workers came to join the men and women were drawn into industry, was hastened by war and revolution. Men were called into the armies while the refugees from the western provinces were predominantly women, and the deurbanisation of the civil war hit the male population hardest. Between 1912 and 1920 the male population of the city decreased by 380,000 and the female by 211,000, and so from mid-1917 women became the majority of the population at just over half (Appendix 4).<sup>21</sup>

In sum, the civil war saw a massive decline in Moscow's population as it fell to only nineteenth largest in the world by 1920. Two-fifths of its citizens left in little over two years, and those who remained suffered from hunger, disease and cold. For the first time since the beginning of industrialisation women became a majority of the population.

## 2. Social structure and the working class

Russian cities, and Moscow in particular, had a far higher percentage than other European cities of independent population (i.e., those earning an income or wage) because of the pattern of urban immigration. The tendency was for the two parts to equalise, and this was not halted by the first world war despite the increased role of women in production and the decrease in the proportion of the child population (Appendices 3, 4), because of

21. In 1897 there were 755 women for every 1000 men; in 1912 843; in February 1917 983, in October 1917 1016; and in August 1920 1063, Stat. spravochnik, p.24; M.Ya. Vydro, Naselenie Moskvyy, M. 1976, pp.18, 21.

the influx of refugees with their families and the closure of the factories in 1917-18. The situation changed radically during the civil war as the population of the city fell and the remainder were pressed into employment. By 1920 the proportion of the independent population had risen substantially, nearly reaching pre-war levels:

Table 2

Independent population of Moscow city, 1912-1920

	Total population	Independent	Dependent	% independent
1912	1,616,415	1,052,263	565,152	65
1918	1,716,022	935,098	780,924	54.5
1920	1,027,000	651,118	375,882	63.4

Sources: Vydro, p.39; KM, col.167. The figure of 935,098 includes 89,003 unemployed: if this number is subtracted the percentage of independent people in 1918 falls to 49.3.

Between 1918 and 1920 the city lost 283,980, or 30.4%, of its independent population, but 405,042, or 51.9%, of its dependent population, which indicates that the majority of those who left were not employed, above all unemployed women and children. Moscow's employment structure returned to an earlier stage of industrial development both because of the departure of dependents, and also because those who remained were drafted into labour. At the same time the occupational structure itself changed.

The greatest change in Moscow's social structure was the fall in the number of bosses (68%) and in the number of service workers, including domestic servants (63.6%). The number of employees of various types fell by a mere 13.5%, much less than

the rate of population fall, and therefore as a proportion of the population rose from 15% in 1918 to 21% in 1920, and as a proportion of the independent population rose from 27.6% to 34.3%. The number of manual workers over this period fell by a third, but as a proportion of the total population increased from 17.8% to 20%. However, because of the increased weight of the employee category manual workers fell slightly as a proportion of the independent population from 32.7% to 31.5% (Appendix 5).

The fall in the numbers of the industrial working class was only slightly higher (43.8%) than the fall in the city's total population and hence there was little change in its relative weight.

Table 3

Moscow's industrial working class, 1913-1921

	Moscow city	Moscow guberniya	Total
1913	148,212	235,632	383,844
1917	205,919	242,824	448,743
1918	155,026	241,829	398,855
1919	115,962	159,971	275,933
1920	87,091	110,605	197,696
1921	84,408	115,421	199,829

Source: Stat. ezhegodnik, p.171.

As a proportion of the total population the group fell from 10.2% in 1912, 9.1% in 1918 (11.7% of adult population over 15), to 8.5% (11% of those over 15); and as a proportion of the independent population increased between 1912 and 1918 from 15.7% to 16.6%, and then fell sharply to 13.4% in 1920, reflecting the general industrial decline.<sup>22</sup> The only major beneficiary of

22. Figures derived by comparing Table 3 with Appendix 1, and KM, col.167.

changes in the occupational structure during the civil war, therefore, were the employees. The expansion was stimulated by the transfer of the capital and the growth of bureaucratic regulation, and by 1920 every third adult Muscovite was employed in some institution or other. Over half of the new posts were occupied by former Moscow factory workers<sup>23</sup> and hence represented a significant drain on the enterprises as their most committed, if not most able, workers left for the offices (Chapter 8).

While the relative decline of the industrial working class is not all that large, its internal composition changed much more radically. Already between 1914 and 1917 the number of 'cadre' workers had fallen by 40% on account of departures for the front.<sup>24</sup> Between 1914 and 1918 there was a high degree of fluidity in the labour force in Moscow with an annual average turnover of 100% as workers moved away from factories, between factories, and from one industry to another.<sup>25</sup> Moscow had been much less successful than Petrograd in preserving its workers from the draft.<sup>26</sup> The military mobilisations of the first war fell above all on the 18-40 male age group (Table 4 following), and by April 1918 61,370 (63%) of the city's industrial workers had been mobilised.<sup>27</sup> By September 1917, for example, only about

23. KM, col.688.

24. Statistika truda, 6-7, 1918, p.2.

25. Ya. Piletskii, Rabochii klass i khozyaistvo Rossii v 1914-1919 godakh, Kiev 1919, p.25.

26. Diane Koenker, Moscow Workers in 1917, PhD dissertation, Michigan 1976, p.116.

27. Calculated from Table 4 and these figures. At the moment of the April 1918 census not less than 60% had been mobilised from those between 18-19, 70% of the 20-24 group, 56% of the 25-29

Table 4

Sex and age profile of Moscow city industrial workers  
on 21 April 1918

Age	Men	Women	Total	Men for every 100 women
Under 14	1037	453	1490	229
15-19	15114	12414	27528	122
20-24	10308	12911	23219	80
25-29	12077	10112	22189	120
30-34	12389	6875	19264	180
35-39	12634	6070	18704	208
40-44	11745	3984	15729	295
45-49	9328	2815	12143	332
50-54	5996	1814	7810	331
55-59	3917	1002	4919	392
Over 60	2824	691	3513	408
TOTAL	97369	59141	156510	164

Source: Dva goda diktatury proletariata, 1917-1919,  
VSNKh, M. 1919, p.19.

20% of the skilled metalworkers were left in the city because of the war.<sup>28</sup> To a large extent only those unsuitable for military service were left and this had a debilitating effect on productivity. The declassing of Moscow's proletariat had therefore begun during the first war. While some workers returned with the demobilisation of early 1918 the economic crisis of the breathing space period once again reduced their numbers. In Butyrskii raion, for instance, the number of workers plummeted from 20,000 in October 1917 to 5000 by April 1918.<sup>29</sup>

group, 36% of the 30-34 group, 32% of the 35-39 group, and there was an 8% deficit from the 40-44 group because of earlier mobilisations, Dva goda diktatury proletariata 1917-1919, VSNKh, M. 1919, p.19.

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28. Sotsial-demokrat, 12 September 1917.

29. P, 6 April 1918.

During the civil war the declassing of Moscow's industrial proletariat intensified. Mel'nichanskii, the leader of the Moscow trade unions for the greater part of the civil war, later described the process. Workers on supply detachments or on other missions preferred to stay in the countryside where food was more readily available. Concurrently, many workers were drawn into the illegal economy and speculation, the production of lighters and other goods for exchange, all of which had a further debilitating effect on industry and class consciousness.<sup>30</sup> In other words, declassing refers not only to changes in the size or internal composition of the working class, but also to changes in its relationship to the industrial economy. It could be argued that the Moscow workers re-established their links not only with the countryside but also with the peasant economy.

The supply, military and other demands on manpower fell above all on Moscow's industrial proletariat. In 1918 a fifth of all the workers sent on supply detachments came from the city, in 1919 two-fifths, and by 1920 nearly three-quarters.<sup>31</sup> Both Zinoviev in Petrograd and Rykov, chairman of VSNKh, expressed concern over the drain that the detachments constituted for the working class.<sup>32</sup> A much greater source of loss, however, were the military mobilisations. A VTsIK decree of 29 May 1918

30. IV Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya profsoyuzov, 14-15 Sentyabr' 1921g., M. 1921, p.13.

31. In 1918 Moscow (city and guberniya) sent out 3703 out of the national total of 16,564; in 1919 11,236 out of 28,103; and in 1920 8562 out of 11,632, KT, 21 September 1920; KM, col.686; Bor'ba klassov, 7-8, 1934, p.184.

32. Medvedev, October Revolution, p.155.

signalled the transition to universal military conscription,<sup>33</sup> and about 8000 Moscow city workers left in the first major draft of 21-24 June 1918. The intensity of the drafts steadily increased, with 9 mobilisations alone in August-September 1918.<sup>34</sup> By the end of 1918 100,000 Moscow city workers had joined the army; between January-May 1919 55,000; and between January-October 1920 49,000.<sup>35</sup> Over the whole course of the war the city sent just under 315,000 people to the front, some of whom returned and not all of whom were workers.<sup>36</sup>

The haemorrhage of workers continued the changes in the internal composition of the working class begun by the first war. The departed workers were replaced, insofar as recruitment took place, by women, the urban petty-bourgeoisie, and peasants. While in 1914 only 27.6% of Moscow's workers were women some industries were dominated by them, such as textiles where there were only 32 men to every 100 women. The first war saw the growth of the female labour force in Moscow to reach 37.6% in 1917, and by that time the proportion of men in the textile industry had fallen to 19%.<sup>37</sup> The proportion of women fell

33. Dekrety sovetskoi vlasti, vol.2, M. 1959, pp.334-5.

34. Lenin i Moskovskie bol'sheviki, M. 1977, pp.331-2.

35. Ocherki istorii Moskovskoi organizatsii KPSS, 1883-1965, M. 1966, pp.332, 334, 339.

36. KM, col.648.

37. Piletskii, p.23. In the traditionally male-dominated printing and metal industries the percentage of men between 1914 and 1917 had fallen from 92.6 to 79.2, and 91.7 to 79.7, respectively (Pechatnik, 3-4, 1 April 1919, p.12). In the Guzhon metal plant, for instance, between 1913 and November 1917 women increased from 5% to 15% of the workforce, TsGAOR, 7952/3/209/26.

slightly to 35.6% in 1918<sup>38</sup> as male workers returned from the army, but it rose sharply to reach 42.7 in 1920. Therefore the wars had seen the proportion of women in Moscow's population increase by 5.5%, but a far more dramatic change had taken place in industry where their proportion had increased by 15.1%. By 1920 52.5% of all women were employed compared to just over a quarter in 1914.<sup>39</sup> The introduction of compulsory labour duty absorbed the urban lower middle class into the factories. They ranged from clerks to those in professions rendered anachronistic by the revolution such as lawyers, small financiers, and so on. The induction of these déclassé people inevitably altered the atmosphere in the factories. The peasants came mainly from the uезда surrounding Moscow. About 90% of the Bromlei metal plant's workforce, for instance, were peasants by 1920, and in the Guzhon metal plant they constituted about 90% of the workforce.<sup>40</sup>

The proportion of office workers in the city's independent population, as we have seen, increased, and in the factories a similar process took place. A survey of Moscow's 13,811 food workers in September 1918 found that 18% of them were office staff, and in some plants there were 19 office workers to 21 workers.<sup>41</sup> Out of 143,309 employed in industry in May 1918 16,657 (11.6%) were office workers, and their proportion increased to 18,973 (15.3%) out of 124,183 in June 1919, and in June 1920

38. Piletskii, p.23.

39. Vydro, p.39.

40. N.M. Aleshchenko, Moskovskii sovet v 1917-1941gg., M. 1976, p.222.

41. Izvestiya Moskovskogo soyuza rabochikh i sluzhashchikh po vyrabotke pishchevikh produktov, 2, 25 November 1918, p.3.



they comprised 15,474 (15.1%) out of 102,837.<sup>42</sup> Therefore the great increase in office workers in factories took place at the end of 1918 and early 1919, and thereafter remained a stable proportion of the workforce.<sup>43</sup> The bureaucratism of the period clearly pervaded the factories as much as the city in general.

Changes in the size and composition of the workforce, the growth of bureaucracy and the illegal economy, weakened the factories as the site of revolutionary activity. A resolution of a general meeting of the Guzhon plant as early as 1 August 1918, for example, compared the plant with 1905 and 1917 when it had been at the forefront of the revolutionary movement, but

Then in the plant only workers worked, and now it is completely different. The best comrades have either died...or gone to the front...We must turn the comrades away from the speculationist temper that is seizing them.<sup>44</sup>

A report on a general meeting in the same plant a year later stated that the meeting resembled less a workers' meeting than a gathering of 'traders from the Sukharevka'.<sup>45</sup> By 1920 the

42. KM, col.184. According to another source the number of workers to one employee in the city fell as follows: 1913 - 14.6; 1917 - 11.5; 1918 - 10.3; 1919 - 8.2; 1920 - 7; 1921 (July) - 6.2, V.Ya. Yarotskii, 'Trud v SSSR', Entsiklopedicheskii slovar', 7e pererabotan. izd., (Granat), vol.41, pt.2, p.267.

43. By the end of October 1919 in the 154 enterprises of Rogozhsko-Simonovskii raion there were 2918 employees to 16,433 workers (17.7%). Since early July 1919 the number of workers had fallen by 3403 (17.1%), but the number of employees had increased by 1549 (88.4%) since early 1919. In the 32 metal plants (the largest single group) there was the greatest proportion of employees (6861 workers to 1585 employees, 22.8%) while the proportion was lowest in the 12 textile mills (1823 to 158, 8.7%), and the 28 tailor shops (2748 to 177, 6.4%), VIMS, 5 July, 3 November 1919.

44. TsGAOR, 7952/3/212/217.

45. P, 27 July 1919.

authorities in Moscow increasingly drew attention to the large numbers of workers who, as it were, for social or political reasons had evaded all the measures aimed at integrating them into the Soviet state system. The literacy campaign of 1920 was designed to serve both political and educational purposes. It revealed a desperate picture of ignorance with over a quarter of a million people in the city illiterate in March 1920,<sup>46</sup> and in a working class raion such as Basmannyi over a third of the working population was either completely or partially illiterate.<sup>47</sup>

More will be said in later chapters about the working class's relationship to the party and state. Here we have seen how the industrial working class had decreased in size by over two-fifths but remained a stable proportion of the population, how office workers emerged as the single largest group in the population, and the declassing of the proletariat as old workers left and other social groups took their place. No industry was immune to these changes. Workers left for the countryside or the fronts, and in the factories the revolutionary enthusiasm of 1917 had given way to the struggle for survival.

46. Stenograficheskie otchety Moskovskogo soveta (Stenotchety MS), 2, 1920, p.26. Vydro, p.47, states that literacy among men in the city had increased from 74.2% in 1902, 81.1% in 1912, to 84.3% in 1920; and among women in those years from 47.6%, 56.6%, to 67.9%.

47. KT, 15 April 1920.

### 3. The war communist economy

#### a. Industry

The civil war saw not only the collapse of the urban economy but also of the industrial economy. Moscow was the greatest centre of Russian industry with 11.7% of all the enterprises and 11% of all the workers in the republic at the time of the industrial census of 31 August 1918.<sup>48</sup> Of the guberniya's 2978 census enterprises two-thirds (1190) were in the city<sup>49</sup> but only two-fifths of the workers, which indicates the smaller scale of factories in the town.<sup>50</sup>

The first world war had seen the increasing concentration of the Moscow working class as metal, engineering, and chemical plants expanded, but still the striking feature of Moscow industry was the absence of such giant works as the Trubochnyi and Putilov plants in Petrograd. Neither was there an overwhelming concentration of workers in a single industry as the metal workers in Petrograd, where they comprised two-thirds of the factory workers and 30% of the country's metalworkers.<sup>51</sup> By 1918 average concentration in Moscow city over the 1006

48. Trudy TsU, vol.26, issues 1-2, M.1926, pp.VIII, XXI, 16.

49. KM, col.167.

50. Average concentration in the guberniya was 608 workers per enterprise (KM, col.169). Industrialists preferred to locate their enterprises beyond the control of the police, sanitary and other regulations of the city.

51. Whereas in Petrograd in 1917 82.1% of the working class were employed in enterprises of over 500 workers (Izmeneniya sots. struktury, p.131) with an average of 740 workers per enterprise, in Moscow concentration averaged at 209 over 960 enterprises (KM, col.169). There has been a major debate over the relative weight of Moscow's textile and metal industries in 1917 centring on the greater 'petty-bourgeois' nature of Moscow's workers. Koenker (1976) discusses the question pp.23,24, 33-4, 54 n30.

enterprises for which figures are available had fallen to 154.<sup>52</sup> Moscow's industry was therefore less of an example of combined and uneven development than Petrograd, an indication of the greater role of native investment. While Moscow had an abundance of small enterprises (942 with less than 500 workers) they employed less than half of the total proletariat. In 1918 over half (52.1%) of Moscow's industrial proletariat (80,831) were still employed in the 64 enterprises (6.4% of the total) of over 500 workers (cf. Appendix 6).<sup>53</sup> Thus the traditional picture of the Moscow working class as a heavily fragmented group the bulk of which ostensibly were textile mill hands should be seen in perspective. It would be true to say, however, that 'The few large plants in Moscow were islands in a sea of small and medium enterprises'.<sup>54</sup>

Table 5 overleaf summarises the changes during the civil war. While the number of census enterprises fell by only a tenth, the fall in the number of industrial workers was over two-fifths, with the greatest decline among textile workers, followed by the chemical and food industries. By 1920 average concentration had fallen to 82 workers per plant. By then the metal industry had become the premier Moscow industry in terms both of enterprises and numbers employed in them, but not in terms of value of gross production where the textile industry had the slight edge (Appendix 9).

52. KM, col.169.

53. KM, cols.169-70.

54. M. Gorky, History of the Civil War in the USSR, vol.2, London 1947, p.68.

Table 5

Moscow industry in 1918 and 1920

31 August 1918					1 June 1920					
Enterprises			Employed		Enterprises			Employed		
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	% fall cf. 1918	No.	%	% fall cf. 1918	
Metal	239	20.1	23,285	15.1	222	20.9	7.1	20,241	23.2	13.1
Textiles	182	15.3	40,372	26.0	177	16.6	2.8	14,178	16.2	64.9
Clothing	157	13.2	15,514	10.0	137	12.9	12.7	14,042	16.1	9.5
Food	130	10.9	16,944	10.9	111	10.4	14.6	12,949	14.8	23.6
Printing	145	12.2	12,987	7.8	123	11.6	15.2	10,675	12.2	11.7
Chemical	119	10.0	14,922	9.6	114	10.7	4.2	6,912	7.9	53.7
Others	218	18.3	31,908	20.6	179	16.9	17.9	8,366	9.6	73.8
TOTAL	1190	100	155,032	100	1063	100	10.7	87,363	100	43.7

Source: KM, col.177.

Cut off from the sources of raw materials by hostile armies, railway dislocation, and with the problems compounded by poor stock-keeping and inefficiency, factories were gradually forced to close. One of the major factors was the shortage of fuel. At the height of the fuel crisis in 1919 Donets coal supplied only 0.3% of Moscow's fuel needs compared to 44.5% in 1914; firewood satisfied 84.1% of Moscow's needs at that time compared to 29% in 1914. By 1919 Moscow's consumption of energy had fallen to 37.9% of the 1914 level (Appendix 8).

The scale of factory closures can be seen from Table 6. By June 1920 nearly two-fifths of Moscow's enterprises were idle, and those still active were working at an average of 45-60% capacity.<sup>55</sup> Since March 1919 the giant Danilovskii mill, for instance, had largely ceased production and its 3000 workers had been transferred to cleaning and maintenance work.<sup>56</sup> The August

55. KT, 7 November 1920

56. KT, 26 March 1920.

Table 6

Factory closures, 1918-1920

	Enterprises					Workers		
	Total	Fully	Partly	Total	Idle	Total	In active ents	In idle ents
July 1918	1190	409	542	951	239	155,032	142,853	12,179
in %	100	34.4	45.5	79.9	20.1	100	92.1	7.9
June 1919	1154	-	-	768	386	105,210	90,704	14,506
in %	100	-	-	66.6	33.4	100	86.1	13.9
June 1920	1063	-	-	657	406	87,363	79,033	8,330
in %	100	-	-	61.8	38.2	100	90.5	9.5

Sources: KM, col.179. The figures for the last two columns of 1918 from K. Leites, Recent Economic Developments in Russia, Oxford 1922, p.148.

1920 census found that the general number of industrial enterprises in the city, excluding the very smallest repair shops, had plummeted from 9000 before the war to 2560.<sup>57</sup>

The fall in the number of enterprises and workers was reflected in the output of Moscow industry. By 1918 this had already fallen to half that of 1917, and during the civil war the precipitous decline continued. By 1920 the production value of Moscow census industry had fallen to 15% of the 1913 level (Appendix 9), 2% higher than the rest of the country. Cut off from cotton-producing areas and the sources of other materials the textile industry, as shown in Table 5, was hit the hardest. By October 1920 out of the 253 small and medium textile mills administered by the Moscow economic council (MSNKh) only 90 were functioning.<sup>58</sup> Nationally in early 1921 the textile industry was

57. KT, 22 October 1920.

58. KT, 7 November 1920.

only producing 4% of the 1913 level,<sup>59</sup> but the city mills were in a slightly better state and producing 7.4% of the 1913 level (Appendix 9).

Even though the metal industry had become the dominant one in Moscow city by the end of 1920 it was only producing 15% of the 1913 level (Appendix 9), though this was still higher than the national average of only 3-4%.<sup>60</sup> The Dinamo plant was producing 5% of 1913 output, while the Guzhon plant was producing 2% of 1913 output with 24% of the workforce (Appendix 13). By autumn 1920 the Guzhon plant was at the trough of its fortunes with only 680 workers on its lists, while in practice only half that number were actually working.<sup>61</sup> In other plants the story was the same. In the Bromlei plant the numbers employed had fallen from 2394 in 1916 to 700 in October 1919.<sup>62</sup>

It was therefore against the background of deurbanisation, changes in the size and composition of the workforce, and the collapse of the industrial economy that the attempt was made to introduce the elements of the socialist economy in Moscow. The transition from workers' control to the state regulation of industry was prepared in Moscow by the expulsion of the Mensheviks and capitalist industry representatives from the economic bodies. This was achieved by the abolition of the Moscow Raion Economic Committee (MREK), formed in December 1917, and the creation in its place of the Moscow Oblast Council of the

59. N. Rodionova, Gody napryazhennogo truda. Iz istorii Moskovskoi partiinoi organizatsii 1921-1925gg. M. 1963, p.4.

60. KT, 17 December 1920. 61. TsGAOR, 7952/3/210/189.

62. Istoriya Moskvyy, vol.6, book 1, M. 1957, p.206.

Economy (MOSNKh) at the II oblast economic conference (20-25 May 1918).<sup>63</sup>

The slogan of the state capitalist period of accounting and control by the terms of the 28 June 1918 nationalisation decree became generalised to national accounting and control. Even before this many Moscow enterprises had already been sequestered or nationalised in response to internal necessities and usually initiated by the workers themselves. The exact number of these has been debated, but it is clear that the figure of 200 enterprises is exaggerated.<sup>64</sup> Recent calculations show that by June 1918 in the city 23 enterprises were directly under the control of MOSNKh and another 14 under some form of supervision, a total of 37 of the largest enterprises.<sup>65</sup> All the other enterprises were under their previous managements supervised by control commissions elected by the factory committees.

By the terms of the June decree all of Moscow's large and most of its medium industry was officially nationalised. The status of many hitherto sequestered enterprises began to be regularised and the difference between formal and actual nationalisation eliminated. For example, the Tilmans Bros. Screw Plant had been sequestered as early as 1915 and transferred

63. Rudzutak was the first chairman of MOSNKh, replaced by Al'perovich in July 1918. The majority of the members of the MOSNKh bureau came from a trade union background, Izvestiya MOSNKh, 1, 1 September 1918, p.3.

64. This figure comes from the MREK list of 2 April 1918 (in Uprochenie sovetskoi vlasti v Moskve i moskovskoi gubernii: dokumenty i materialy, M. 1958, pp.243-9), and that of VSNKh of 1 June, in Narodnoe khozyaistvo, 4, 1918, p.5.

65. A.V. Strakhov, 'Natsionalizatsiya krupnoi promyshlennosti goroda Moskvyy', Uchenye zapiski MGPI im. V.I. Lenina, 200, 1964, p.223.



to the Main Artillery Board.<sup>66</sup> After October 1917 it was transferred to MREK with the sequestration order still in force. Only at the end of 1918, however, was a new MOSNKh board appointed to replace the one instated by MREK in March of that year. Worker and trade union representation on the board was now formalised. Though working under MOSNKh it was formally only nationalised by a VTsIK decree of 28 November 1918.<sup>67</sup>

The story illustrates the slowness of the transition to full nationalisation in Moscow. This was particularly the case with the heterogeneous textile industry. A general textile body was formed under MOSNKh in the summer of 1918 in which Ya.E. Rudzutak played a key role. By November 1918 40 of the largest textile enterprises had been surveyed and it was decided to nationalise 18 of them, including the Trekhgornaya and Danilovskii mills. A number of smaller mills were nationalised and amalgamated. The final nationalisation of Moscow textile industry was only completed in summer 1919.<sup>68</sup>

By the end of 1918 more than 600 enterprises had been nationalised in Moscow.<sup>69</sup> At the II SNKh congress (19-27 December 1918) Rykov pronounced the epitaph on cooperation with capitalists. Nationalisation had been largely completed and now, he stated, basically only organisational work remained, trustification and the formation of production groupings.<sup>70</sup> Lenin put it more vividly: 'It is necessary... for all the

66. Strakhov, p.256.

67. ibid, p.257.

68. ibid, p.273.

69. Aleshchenko (1973), p.90.

70. Trudy II vserossiiskogo s"ezda sovetov narodnogo khozyaistva, 19-27 dekabrya 1918g.: stenograficheskii otchet, M. 1919, pp.1-6.

economic forces of the country to be held in one fist'.<sup>71</sup> This fist was VSNKh and its glavki in the centre and the economic councils in the localities.

With the great concentration of industry in the Moscow region it was felt that MOSNKh, covering 15 gubernii, was inadequate to serve the city. In September 1918 the Moscow soviet resolved to form a city economic council, a proposal ratified by VSNKh on 31 October, and within the city limits a sovnarkhoz was formed (MosGorSNKh, or MGSNKh) with the rights of guberniya SNKh.<sup>72</sup> By December MGSNKh, under the chairmanship of M.F. Vladimirskii, was responsible for 185 enterprises.<sup>73</sup> It had departments covering all the main Moscow industries plus those for fuel, army supplies, transport, workers' control, finance, statistics, and enterprise management. Each department was headed by a collegium.<sup>74</sup>

The relationship between the local sovnarkhozy and the local soviets on the one hand, and the sovnarkhozy and VSNKh and its glavki on the other, was the source of much confusion throughout the civil war. Up to mid-1918 the soviets had carried large responsibility for economic management and initially the local

71. ibid., p.18.

72. Izvestiya MOSNKh, 1, 1918, p.1. In Moscow guberniya an SNKh was formed on 25 April 1918. The II SNKh congress at the end of 1918 abolished oblast SNKh. Once again it was felt that oblast groupings encouraged separatism and localism.

73. N.M. Aleshchenko, 'Moskovskii soviet v 1918-1920gg.', Istoricheskie zapiski, 91, 1973, p.90.

74. ibid, p.95.

SNKh were their departments,<sup>75</sup> as in the case of the MGSNKh, but they were removed from this subordination and in February 1919 VSNKh affirmed that the local SNKh were purely its own executive organs.<sup>76</sup> Even before this the large and medium enterprises had been under the direct control of VSNKh and beyond the jurisdiction of the local soviets,<sup>77</sup> and this move only served to intensify the separation of the municipal authorities from the direct control of the economy. By 1920, for example, Moscow's 12 major metal plants (Guzhon, List Butyrskii and List Sofiiskii, Bromlei, Grachev, Russkaya Mashina (Mikhel'son), Dobrov and Nabgol'ts, Dangauer and Kaizer, etc.,) were under the control of VSNKh (Gomomez), and now employed a total of 5745 people, 4609 workers (80%) and 1136 employees. About 80 of the smaller plants were under the metal department of MSNKh (Moskvamet) and employed less than 5000 in total.<sup>78</sup>

The first world war had seen the split in Moscow industry between the privileged sector working for the war effort and a

75. Stated in the summer 1918 VSNKh instructions on them, see Gimpel'son (1977), p.18.

76. Gimpel'son (1977), p.53.

77. In 1918 alone 42 glavki were formed with wide powers of running enterprises and controlling raw materials and products (II s"ezd SNKh, p.76). The III all-Russian SNKh congress in January 1920 divided enterprises into three categories: those under direct administration of VSNKh ('trustified'); those managed by local SNKh under VSNKh supervision; and enterprises of local significance managed by the local SNKh (Carr, 2, pp.184-5). The number of glavki mushroomed to cover ever smaller segments of industry. In early 1921, for example, the Moscow metal and chemical industries were run by 14 glavki apiece (Byulleten' MSNKh, 5, 10 April 1921, p.1).

78. Byulleten' MSNKh, 14, 31 August 1921, pp.5-6. These figures are lower than those shown in Table 5 and Appendix 7 but are probably more reliable.

deprived sector, including the municipal services, starved of capital, labour and raw materials. This division reappeared in an intensified form under war communism. In 1919 66 city enterprises (8.6% of the total active) were working purely for military orders.<sup>79</sup> In order to supply the needs of the front in summer 1920 over 20 Moscow factories, including Guzhon, G. List, and Bromlei, were declared udarnye (shock-working). To preserve a corps of skilled workers they were given preference in the distribution of the limited supply of food, raw materials and fuel. On 5 November 1920 V.M. Likhachev reported that the majority of Moscow's enterprises were not working for local needs but for glavki and centres.<sup>80</sup> Between 15 July and 1 November 1920 three-quarters of the output of Moscow's clothing industry went to the front, and a similar proportion of metal output.<sup>81</sup> The economy was transformed into a war economy whose main function was to supply the army and not the population.

The nationalisation of small enterprises was not part of the 28 June 1918 nationalisation decree nor of the revolutionary programme in general. However, the length of the civil war, the dislocation of the financial system, raw material and supply shortages, the necessity of mobilising small industry to work for the army, the attempt to eliminate the free market, and perhaps most importantly the political motive of extirpating all

79. 11 for the Red Army Artillery Board, 23 for the Military Engineering board, 14 under the VSNKh metal department, and 13 chemical plants under the VSNKh chemical department, Lenin i Moskovskie bol'sheviki, M. 1969, p.365.

80. KT, 6 November 1920.

81. N. Nikolaev, Moskovskii rabochii i krest'yanin, M. 1921, p.12.

capitalist and commodity relations, all led to the extension of nationalisation. In August-November 1920 small industrial and commercial interests were expropriated, culminating in the 29 November 1920 VSNKh decree on the general nationalisation of small interests, including craft industries.<sup>82</sup>

The state at the end of 1920 therefore extended its economic control over the last independent corners of Moscow's economic life. The problem of how to manage this new flood of state ownership was never resolved during war communism. A few months earlier the Moscow soviet's own economic department had been abolished following the unification of the city and guberniya SNKh to form MSNKh on 19 June 1920.<sup>83</sup> This move, together with the general nationalisation, marked the high water mark of war communist centralisation, but by the end of 1920 the first attempts were being made to allow more local involvement.

One sign of the decentralising wind was the idea of forming guberniya economic conferences (gubekoso) to take on some of the functions of the glavki, though in Moscow one was only formed in mid-1921. Another sign was the revival of the Moscow soviet's economic department on 4 November 1920 with Likhachev, also head of MSNKh, as its chairman. Its duties now included the right to supervise MSNKh, the glavki and VSNKh centres, in order to 'root out bureaucratism and rationally to organise the labour force'.<sup>84</sup> Economic management still very much remained in the hands of the economic councils. By November 1920 MSNKh, with the guberniya,

82. Byulleten' MSNKh, 1, 30 January 1921, p.13.

83. KT, 3 September 1920.

84. Byulleten' MSNKh, 2, 15 December 1920, p.17.

had 1138 enterprises under its control,<sup>85</sup> while the largest plants remained under the direct control of VSNKh.

The lack of coherence in the relationships between the various economic bodies was criticised throughout the period. Already in September 1918 Al'perovich complained about the poor organisation of MOSNKh, especially the lack of competent personnel, but above all he criticised the chaotic relations between enterprises, local and higher economic bodies, which he characterised as meshochnichestvo (borrowing the term used for non-state supply) and marked by excessive petty interference of higher bodies in local affairs, and the lack of initiative from below.<sup>86</sup> By the IX party conference in March 1920 attempts were made to instil coherence in the economy by accepting Trotsky's call for a comprehensive national plan. The likelihood of a national plan succeeding when even partial local ones had proved failures indicates the excess of faith in centralisation typical of war communism. The first attempts at planning for individual industries in Moscow, such as one for the garment industry in 1920, had proved utter failures. In the case of the garment industry the plan was only fulfilled by 20-25%, and not only were unpredictable factors such as the supply of fuel and raw materials not taken into consideration, but even basic factors were not taken into consideration leading to wildly optimistic targets.<sup>87</sup> At the II guberniya soviet congress (15-17 December 1920) Likhachev described the economic chaos: the massive

85. KT, 18 November 1920.

86. Izvestiya MOSNKh, 2, 15 September 1918, p.2

87. Byulleten' MSNKh, 2, 15 December 1920, p.2.

economic apparatus worked badly, VSNKh had too many units, it was too large and therefore could not give each department specific tasks, and no general plan for Moscow could be drawn up because of the enormous number of glavki and the parallelism of the economic bodies.<sup>88</sup> Planning was impossible, he argued, because of the friction between VSNKh and MSNKh, and instead he called for a massive dose of decentralisation with MSNKh to be responsible for all of Moscow industry with the exception of some trusts.<sup>89</sup> Such measures, as with the formation of the gubekoso, had to await the NEP, and in the meantime the 'bureaucratic unreality' noted by Chamberlin reigned supreme.

The economy was centralised and run from a central bureaucracy in Moscow, and even its own industry was largely beyond the purview of the city authorities and the local economic council. A first awareness that such intense centralisation was counter-productive appeared in late 1920 but the fear that decentralisation would stimulate 'localism', the abiding concern of the period, militated against serious attempts to return the management of industry to the localities. As with all state bodies the economic management organisations expanded into vast bureaucracies. By the end of 1918 the staff of VSNKh had expanded from its original 300 to 6000,<sup>90</sup> and the staff of MOSNKh had expanded from 460 at the end of July 1918<sup>91</sup> to 4200 in

88. KT, 17 December 1920.

89. Byulleten' MSNKh, 1, 30 January 1921, p.13.

90. VIMS, 7 October 1918.

91. A survey of the 460 employees of MOSNKh at the end of July 1918 found that out of 383 technical employees 180 had previously worked for capitalist economic regulatory bodies. Only 7

MGSNKh, now covering only the city and guberniya, by December 1920. Few of these were in the party and those that were, it was reported, rarely attended cell meetings.<sup>92</sup> P.G. Smidovich, chairman of MSNKh in early 1920, at no stage was a member of the Moscow party committee (MK), and Likhachev himself only joined as a candidate member in November 1920 (Appendix 14). Central and local economic management largely functioned without direct party interference, and this was only one of two spheres that escaped close local party involvement (the other was the Cheka). The party was responsible for providing a satisfactory environment for industry to function, and to minimise the dislocating social effects of the centralised system of economic management.

The whole question of the baleful influence of bureaucracy, of the attempt to hold the whole economy in one fist, was to be a central concern of the party throughout the civil war. The extension of nationalisation and the growth of institutions meant that by the end of the civil war the vast majority of Moscow's population stood in an employee relationship to the state. In this respect war communism was successful in eliminating all potential sources of opposition based on property ownership to

(1.8%) were communists, and of the whole 460 only 25 (5.4%) were communists. The executive apparatus of MOSNKh was therefore largely composed of civil servants and specialists of the old bourgeois organisations. At the same time all 77 of its leading workers had earlier worked in various soviet organisations and in the workers' groups of bourgeois bodies, and 18 (23.4%) of them were party members, V.Z. Drobizhev, 'Obrazovanie sovetov narodnogo khozyaistva v Moskovskom promyshlennom raione (1917-1918gg.)', in Iz istorii velikoi oktyabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revolyutsii, M. 1957, pp.107-8.

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92. KT, 6 February 1921.



Bolshevik state hegemony. The development of the working class's relationship to this state property, however, was a more complex process. At the same time, the locality's tenuous control over its industry, and the weak links between the local party and the economic functions of the state, were to prove the local party's Achilles heel once the 'socialist offensive' of rapid industrialisation was launched.

b. Trade and supply

The characteristic feature of war communism was the attempt to destroy the free market. The emphasis was on maintaining industry and the working class at an adequate level to provide the needs of the Red Army. All surpluses, above all those of the peasantry, were to be in the hands of the state and distributed to further its objectives.

In spring 1918 the nationalisation of trade enterprises began. Wholesale trade firms were handed over to central state institutions and retail outlets to the Moscow soviet. The latter in July 1918 formed a commission to municipalise private trade. By autumn 1918 the greater part of trade was in the hands of the city, though in practice this was often a legal fiction with shops simply rechristened the property of the soviet. With the development of war communism the capitalist sectors of the economy were progressively declared illegal: trade capital (internal trade) on 21 November 1918; cooperatives on 30 November 1918. This measure was extended by the nationalisation of the cooperative (Moscow narodnyi) bank on 7 December 1918. The remaining autonomy of the cooperatives was eliminated by the decree of 20 March 1919 by which they were fused with

Narkomprod.<sup>93</sup>

The aim was to ensure the population with the planned supply of products by concentrating resources in a single body, Narkomprod. However between this aim and reality, between the decrees and their implementation, there remained a gulf which was not bridged within the framework of war communism. As Lozovskii stated at the II SNKh congress in December 1918: 'We are setting ourselves tasks that we cannot fulfil... or to fulfil them we use the old apparatus'.<sup>94</sup>

Already by the spring of 1918 the receipt of supplies to Moscow had become very irregular.<sup>95</sup> The city was separated from the grain producing regions by the Germans in the Ukraine, Krasnov on the Don, the Dutov groups in Central Asia, and with the Czech revolt in May 1918 supplies from the Volga region were halted. Addressing a meeting of the Moscow soviet executive committee (EC) on 28 May M.E. Sheptev, of the soviet's supply department, reported that in the second half of May grain arrivals in Moscow had almost ceased. Some of the grain designated for the city had been diverted to aid the near starving Petrograd.<sup>96</sup>

In response to the supply crisis the presidium of VTsIK on 9 and 27 May 1918 adopted decrees on the supply dictatorship whereby the grain monopoly (introduced by the Provisional

93. Kritsman, p.65.

94. II s"ezd SNKh, p.111.

95. The plan for supplying the city in January 1918 was fulfilled by only 7.1%, in February by 16%, in April by 6.1%, and in May by only 5.7%. Istoriya velikoi oktyabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revolyutsii, M. 1962, p.436.

96. G.S. Ignat'ev, Moskva v pervyi god proletarskoi diktatury, M. 1975, p.248.

Government in spring 1917) was strengthened and supplies were concentrated in the hands of the state. Committees of the poor (kombedy) were founded by the joint SNK and VTsIK decree of 11 June 1918.<sup>97</sup> They were directed against the kulak by intensifying the class war in the countryside and served as part of the non-economic methods of extracting the surplus from the countryside typical of war communism. The 28 May 1918 city party conference had talked of sending thousands of the best workers on a 'revolutionary crusade' to obtain grain from the producing regions.<sup>98</sup> The problem of grain supply was seen as the technical one of transporting the available surpluses to the cities.<sup>99</sup>

To this end workers' detachments were formed to aid in the requisitioning programme. On 4 June 1918 the MK confirmed proposals for the formation of supply detachments under party and trade union control.<sup>100</sup> In fact, while the party insisted on its influence over them, and in its instructions of 11 June the MK called on every raion party organisation to donate 5% of its membership to them,<sup>101</sup> they were officially subordinate to the

97. In 1918 4461 kombedy were formed in Moscow guberniya: 7 city, 9 raion, 14 uezd, 154 volost, and 4227 village ones (M.B. Dolgovyazova, Demokraticheskie preobrazovaniya v khode sotsialisticheskoi revolyutii oktyabr' 1917-1918, po materialiam moskovskoi gubernii, Avtoref. diss., M. 1971, p.12). By the end of 1918, with the adoption of Lenin's middle-peasant line, they were gradually phased out.

98. P, 30 May 1918.

99. Moskovskaya gorodskaya i Moskovskaya oblastnaya organizatsii KPSS v tsifrakh, M. 1972, p.21.

100. Uprochenie, pp.319-20.

101. ibid., p.325.

soviet supply bodies.<sup>102</sup> Despite the party influence the 'revolutionary crusade' often took on violent forms. At the IV Moscow trade union and factory conference on 27 June 1918 Lenin admitted that the supply detachments 'often stray from the right path and turn into criminals'.<sup>103</sup> Concern over the behaviour of these detachments prompted the 13 August 1918 SNK decree shifting responsibility for them from the soviets to the trade unions. Nevertheless, the worries were not allayed, and at the 9 September 1918 inter-raion party conference, by which time Moscow had sent 1500 people, Zelenskii urged that Moscow should cease participating in them.<sup>104</sup> His motion was rejected but the meeting urged that participants should be strictly screened by the TUs.<sup>105</sup> In February 1919 the MK formed a special commission to oversee the formation of the units, and in that month alone sent 300 communists on them.<sup>106</sup> By 1920 detachments were being formed less frequently with less than a third sent out than in 1919.<sup>107</sup>

While the supply detachments provided some grain they did not end the shortages. At various times during the civil war the government and the Moscow soviet were induced to ease the grain monopoly by legalising the so-called meshochniki (bagmen), a system whereby people were allowed to bring grain into the city, usually with an upper limit of 1.5 poods (24 kgs). The story of

102. ibid., pp.323-4; 330-2; 337-42; 345.

103. Lenin PSS, vol.36, p.448. 104. P, 13 September 1918.

105. P, 22 September 1918. 106. Moskovskaya gorodskaya, p.X.

107. 71 detachments had been sent out in 1918; 384 in 1919; and 116 up to October 1920, Bor'ba klassov, 7-8, 1934, p.184; KT, 21 September 1920.

these polutorapudniki illustrates the problems confronting the soviet in supplying the city: it was hindered both by central policy, and by the enthusiasm of the party activists in the raions who considered the relaxation of supply policy a breach in the bulwarks of socialism.

When on 24 August 1918 the soviet for the first time announced the legalisation of the bagmen,<sup>108</sup> it was welcomed by the Zamoskvorech'e party organisation, but the majority of the other raions criticised the measure and their opposition was led by the guberniya party committee (MGK) meeting in Moscow on 29 August.<sup>109</sup> In September the polutorapudniki brought 4.5 million poods of grain to Moscow,<sup>110</sup> three million journeys if the legal maximum was adhered to, and this obviously led to congestion on the railways. At the X Moscow guberniya party conference on 3 November 1918 Minkov argued that the MGK could take the credit for having forced the Moscow soviet to rescind permission for this activity.<sup>111</sup>

The government supply monopoly covered not only grain but most other foods. In a debate in the Moscow soviet on 21 January 1919, held against a background of near famine in the city, Maksimov, head of the soviet's supply department, supported the

108. P, 25 August 1918.

109. P, 1 September 1918.

110. Kritsman, p.140.

111. P, 12 November 1918. In a decree of 5 September 1918 the SNK insisted that the Moscow soviet rescind the legalisation of bagmanism by 1 October 1918 (Dekrety sovetskoi vlasti, vol.3, M. 1964, pp.292, 295). Narkomprod had banned the bagmen in mid-September 1918 (P, 22 September 1918). Armed roadblocks (zagradytel'nye otryady) were placed around cities to enforce the measures against bagmanism, and their removal was one of the demands of the Kronstadt insurgents of 1 March 1921.

demands to return some foods to an independent supply status. Supporters of a liberalisation of supply policy called for some of the cafes to be reopened, and criticised the bureaucratic organisation of supply. Particular anger was aroused over the incident where a canteen, used by thousands of workers, had been closed on the grounds of staff shortages even though workers had offered to run it themselves. Other speakers, however, put their faith in the current supply policies and called for vigorous action against bagmen. In his summing up the chairman of the session, Vladimirskii, insisted that the soviet had little latitude in supply policy in any case since the problem was the responsibility of central government.<sup>112</sup> On this question, as in the economy, Moscow's freedom of action was severely circumscribed. Nevertheless, it appears that soon after, bagmanism was once again legalised in attempt to relieve the worst shortages at a time of particularly severe shortages.

In June 1919 the government once again summarily terminated legal bagmanism on the grounds that railway transport could be used more effectively to transport government supplies. Faced with increasing discontent and intensified shortages the soviet at the end of the month rejected calls for the reintroduction of the allowance (which it could not do anyway without the centre's permission), but it did relax some of the restrictions on railway travel. The party was mobilised to explain the termination of legal bagmanism as part of the attempt to defuse the tension in the city.<sup>113</sup> By early July 1919 the government itself was unable

112. Stenotchety MS, 2, 1919, pp.17-32.

113. P, 25 June 1919.

to issue rations in Moscow. Kamenev reported to the soviet on 12 July 1919 that the masses were 'gripped by a mood of dissatisfaction' and that several factories had gone on strike (see below).<sup>114</sup> In 1920 bagmanism remained illegal despite the poor harvest and the increased decrepitude of the railways. By the end of the year there were periods when no grain at all reached Moscow, and in early 1921 the supply shortages provoked a massive confrontation between the workers and the government. At the same time between the chaos of the economy and the inefficiency of the supply mechanism there arose an illegal economy.

c. The illegal economy

The illegal market had already developed during the first war, but with the development of war communism it became the only market. Despite the increasing role of state natural supply,<sup>115</sup> the development of a system of preferential rations,<sup>116</sup> and the growth of a system of canteens,<sup>117</sup> the free market still remained

114. P, 15 July 1919.

115. Nationally, the average workers' budget (including housing) from state natural (moneyless) supply was as follows: 1917 - 5%; 1918 - 41%; 1919 - 63%; and 1920 - 75%, Kritsman, p.130.

116. The population was variously divided into categories, at first 4 and then 3, depending on the type of work. Thus in April 1920 674,179 people were in the first category, 364,193 in the second, and 94,459 in the third. 261,383 workers and 240,000 employees had a right to supplementary rations. 356,000 people were in juvenile categories (KT, 17 April 1920). Far more rations were issued than the total population, and the issue of supplementary rations tended to negate the whole system's aim of giving priority to those engaged in physical labour.

117. On 1 March 1920 479 canteens were functioning in the city used daily by 376,000 people. Half of them served only tea and sandwiches, KT, 20 March 1920.

the provenance of a large, though apparently declining, proportion of food. In the first half of 1918 in Moscow 85% of workers and 77% of non-workers used the free market to buy bread; in March-April 1919 the proportions (in both capitals) were 75% and 74%, respectively, and by 1920 only a quarter of the workers' budget was devoted to the free market, but that of the non-worker was higher.<sup>118</sup>

The lack of an effective exchange mechanism became ever more marked with the development of war communism. New forms arose to fill the gap and the foremost of these was speculation. As the Menshevik Dalin put it at the II SNKh congress:

Speculation has grown to such an extent as never before...You say that it is a small fault of the mechanism. Hurry. Shoot. That is not terrible, we've got used to it. Speculation is the surrogate that you have created for the bourgeoisie.<sup>119</sup>

Bagmanism was only one facet of the free market. Many enterprises requiring goods in short supply entered into the free market, i.e., into commodity relations, to obtain essential supplies. But the free market was above all the Sukharevka, which has taken on a meaning that lasts to this day. It symbolises the inextirpability of commodity and commodity capitalist relations under socialist economic systems. The Sukharevka itself was an enormous, perpetually crowded market square to the North-East of the Moscow city centre (now Kolkhoznaya).<sup>120</sup> All goods were sold there, especially those on

118. Kritsman, p.139.

119. II s"ezd SNKh, p.26.

120. The Sukharevka and other markets have been described by many authors. Among the most vivid are, Emma Goldman, My Disillusionment in Russia, London 1923, pp.23-4; Aleksander



which a state monopoly had been declared. The socialist economy and repressive apparatus could not eliminate this excrescence of the underground. And they were partially responsible for its existence. The natural economy (food, transport, housing and services issued free) increased in importance, and fixed prices were extended to cover ever more goods to restrict the commodity economy, and yet money was still issued by the state, above all in the form of wages, which could hardly be used in the moneyless part of the economy and so was forced to go outside it, into the illegal economy.<sup>121</sup> The logical step would have been to abolish money altogether and make barter the means of exchange, but the free market itself played an important role in sustaining the population and the socialist economy.

In 1919-20 the battle against speculation became a central concern of the authorities in Moscow. A report in late 1919 noted that speculation had reached unheard of proportions and now encompassed the larger part of the population.<sup>122</sup> Another correspondent in July 1920 claimed that there was a vast army of speculators 'sitting openly in the cafes'.<sup>123</sup> The campaign for universal labour duty was closely linked with the offensive against the speculator. In April 1920, for example, it was claimed that up to 20% of the population of the guberniya lived a 'parasitical existence'.<sup>124</sup> At the same time speculation in the

Berkman, The Bolshevik Myth: Diary 1920-22, London 1925, pp.55-60; and Marguerite Harrison, Marooned in Moscow, New York 1921, pp.150-7.

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121. Kritsman, p.142.

122. P, 17 September 1919.

123. VIMS, 21 July 1919.

124. KT, 28 April 1920.

contemporary sense was not restricted to individual initiative but involved cooperative organisations and enterprises. A report in mid-1920 admitted that the Sukharevka market still continued despite the elimination of the bagmen, who had previously been held responsible for supplying it.<sup>125</sup> Most of the material sold there now came from the soviet organs themselves.

The development of Rabkrin (workers' inspection) was an attempt to plug the leakage of state goods to the market. Another was the increased role of the Moscow Cheka (MChK) in policing the economic system. At a Moscow soviet EC meeting on 1 October 1920 Messing, the MChK chairman, argued that the Cheka's main purpose was the battle against speculation and 'crises at the workplace'. In 1920 alone the MChK had arrested about 14,000 'speculators' in raids on the Sukharevka and other markets, 70% of whom, it was reported, had no defined profession.<sup>126</sup> The pervasive influence of abolishing the legal market and, in the context, its pernicious influence on social relations by classifying a whole range of activities as 'speculation', provided the milieu in which the party sought to protect itself from what was seen as a dangerous corruption.

The economic debates of 1920 in the party were largely over the admissability of making concessions to the consumer. Trotsky at one pole was joined by Rykov, his opponent over militarisation, on this issue, while Kamenev emerged as the champion of the consumer in urging the liberalisation of supply policy and allowing some free trade.<sup>127</sup> At the IX party congress

125. KT, 4 June 1920.

126. KT, 2 October 1920.

127. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 12, 4 January 1920.

he vividly described the slow death of the capitals. He argued that about 80% of the economy was conducted in the illegal second economy and urged timely concessions which would allow victory in the long-term.<sup>128</sup> Rykov at the congress dismissed Kamenev's arguments as a capitulation to the consumer point of view, and instead put his faith in the single economic plan to integrate the various branches of the economy.<sup>129</sup> For Lenin Kamenev's ideas, if implemented, signified quite simply, the end of Soviet power.<sup>130</sup> It would take the major political crisis from late 1920 to change Lenin's mind.

The civil war saw a major demographic collapse in Moscow, the dispersion of a large part of Moscow's working class and changes in the composition of those who remained. Industry was run as a single vast state trust in which even local Moscow party and soviet authorities had little say. It concentrated on supplying the needs of the army while the population lacked basic goods. The illegal economy expanded to fill the gaps in the official mechanism and to provide what the state sector could not provide, but the increasingly narrow definition of legal economic activity enhanced the role of the police apparatus. It was in this context that the labour relations of war communism were developed.

128. IX s"ezd RKP(b), mart-aprel' 1920 goda: protokoly, M. 1960., pp.195-6.

129. ibid., pp.179-80.

130. ibid., p.27.

## CHAPTER 3

### Labour and the Labour Process

The attempt to extend state control over industry at a time of economic collapse had major political consequences. The main problem for the Bolsheviks was to ensure that the working class kept up a certain minimum level of productivity and did not fall sway to hostile political currents. As war communism intensified the emphasis was increasingly placed on coercion, but by the end of 1920 even this proved inadequate when faced with catastrophic economic collapse and supply shortages. The role of the trade unions was undermined, labour was increasingly militarised, and in response unrest increased to an extent that finally posed a threat to the regime and hence led to a change in economic policies.

#### 1. The trade unions

##### a. Size and organisation

The debate over the role of the trade unions in the soviet state has been described by several authors so we shall restrict ourselves to some aspects of the question in Moscow.<sup>1</sup> The trade unions were the location of a potential divergence between the party-state and the working class. They looked both to the state and reflected its labour and economic policies, and to the

1. On the national debate see, A. Brodersen, The Soviet Worker: Labour and Government in Soviet Society, NY 1966; M. Dewar, Labour Policy in the USSR 1917-1928, London 1956; Isaac Deutscher, Soviet Trade Unions: Their Place in Soviet Labour Policy, London 1950; T.T. Hammond, Lenin on Trade unions and Revolution 1893-1917, New York 1957.

working class and in theory defended its interests. As Al'perovich, having moved from the economic council to become chairman of the Moscow TUs, put it in 1921, the main task of the trade unions during war communism had been to support the Soviet state, This had required the formation of an apparatus based on centralised authority and the creation of massive unions covering whole industries:

With such a backward working class it could not be allowed into the centre of decision-making. Thus centralism, the obedience of the lower to the higher, was necessary.

Unions covering whole industries, he argued, were designed to break down the attraction among the working class of group or professional interests.<sup>2</sup>

Such a policy carried its own penalties, as Mel'nichanskii recognised:

During the civil war the boards of the unions became isolated from the masses... Objective conditions did not allow the extension of the influence of the trade unions on the masses by becoming close to the workers. The organs of the trade unions and their members became an insignificant and insufficiently qualified contingent of workers. All [TU] workers were constantly mobilised leaving only two or three qualified people in each union. In these circumstances the conduct of general work was concentrated in the chancelleries of the unions, and it was difficult<sup>3</sup> to conduct organisational work in the factories.

During the civil war the trade unions underwent the paradoxical process of inflated numerical growth and at the same time the loss of internal moral authority and a fall in their relative position in regard to the party and the soviets.

A central bureau of Moscow trade unions had been formed in

2. S. Al'perovich, Chetvertyi s"ezd profsoyuzov i puti Russkogo profdvizheniya, M. 1921, p.2.

3. IV Mosk. gub. konf. profsoyuzov, p.18.

1905, but from 1906 to 1917 it had been illegal and had only an episodic existence. In February 1917 it was resurrected by F.D. Denisov (the first chairman), E.N. Ignatov and T.V. Sapronov. By November 1917 it included Tomskskii as chairman, Mel'nichanskii as secretary, and other leading trade unionists. All boards of unions organised on a professional basis sent representatives to the MSPS (as it was now called), and in November 1917 representation was reorganised on the principle of proportionality depending on the size of the union. The MSPS plenum had formed an executive committee (EC) on 3 March 1917 and its powers were extended by the plenum meeting on 1 December 1917. 39 trade unions were represented at the December plenum, and it elected an EC of 15.<sup>4</sup> At the first session of the EC on 4 December a presidium of 5 was elected with Mel'nichanskii as secretary.<sup>5</sup> The II all-Russian trade union congress 1 January 1919 called for the formation of united guberniya trade union councils. In Moscow this only took place on 29 September 1919 at the I guberniya trade union conference.<sup>6</sup> A new Moscow guberniya TU council (MGSPS) representing the city and guberniya was elected, which in turn elected a presidium to conduct current work.<sup>7</sup> The conference denounced the idea of union

4. Andreev (50), Kozelev, Mel'nichanskii, Polonskii, Tomskii, Rykunov, Rudzutak, Denisov, Bakhutov, Kudryashev, Poznanskii, Krol', Moskovich, Libin, Maksimov, Moskovskii sovet professional'nykh soyuzov v 1917g., M. 1927, p.135.

5. Bakhutov, Kozlovskii, Mel'nichanskii, Polonskii and Tomskii, MSPS v 1917g., p.141.

6. Out of the 765 delegates 412 were communists, but over a fifth of the delegates (169) were sympathetic to the Menshevik position of 'independence and unity', P, 27 September 1919.

7. KM, col.679.

independence (nezavisimost') from soviet power.<sup>8</sup>

Membership of the trade unions grew rapidly during the civil war, even though the number of workers in industry fell. Union membership was obligatory with dues collected directly from the accounts department of the enterprise or institution. The largest growth in union membership came from institutions and not from factories. Between the I and II guberniya trade union conferences (September 1919 - September 1920) the proportion of office union delegates rose from 21.6% to 32.5%, and those from industrial unions fell from 46.4% to 38.2%.<sup>9</sup> Trade union membership figures in Moscow in the early period are confused, and complicated by the unclear distinction between the city and the guberniya. By October 1917 in the city and guberniya there were about 474,000 members in 53 trade unions,<sup>10</sup> rising to 552,664 in 61 unions in mid-1918. Thereafter the number of unions fell sharply to 32 in early 1919 with 639,678 members, and 22 in January 1921 with 786,950 members (Appendix 10). Clearly these figures are grossly inflated, even including the guberniya, and reveal the largely formal nature of union membership during the civil war. Almost everyone in employment was automatically considered a union member. The changed occupational structure of the city is revealed by the fact that by early 1921 the number of

8. P, 27 September 1919.

9. Obzor deyatel'nosti MGSPS za period mezhdu II i III gubernskimi s"ezdami (sentyabr' 1920-mai 1921gg), M. 1921, p.73. In Russia as a whole the percentage of TU members working directly in production fell as follows: 1918 57.4; 1919 45.5; 1920 37; 1921 34.7, A. Aluf, Professional'nye soyuzy v period voennogo kommunizma, M. 1925, p.28.

10. Koenker (1976), pp.500-2;

unionised soviet workers had surpassed the railway and textile workers as the single largest union.

The plenum of the MGSPS consisted of representatives of the individual guberniya unions in proportion to their membership. For example, after the II guberniya trade union conference in September 1920 the plenum consisted of 118 representatives from the 22 unions (plus 14 delegates from each uezd):<sup>11</sup> 15 apiece from the textile and railway unions, the metal union 10, the print workers 3, and so on.<sup>12</sup> The presidium at that time consisted of nine people, who in turn selected an inner presidium of 3.<sup>13</sup> Every member of the presidium was given the responsibility to oversee several unions. As a member of the MGSPS he had no right to change resolutions or decisions of union bodies. In case of a disagreement between a member of the presidium and an individual union the full MGSPS plenum had to be consulted,<sup>14</sup> though there is no record of such a conflict in this period being discussed by the full MGSPS. Work was clearly concentrated in the hands of the presidium, which between 26 September 1920 and 15 April 1921 met 57 times,<sup>15</sup> while over the same period the plenum met only 14 times.<sup>16</sup>

11. Obzor deyatel'nosti MGSPS, p.3.

12. Protokoly MGSPS, 1, 26 September 1920, p.6.

13. ibid., p.3. Mel'nichanskii was no longer chairman, having joined Budyenny's cavalry in Poland. His place was taken by Antselovich briefly, and then in December 1920 by Lozovskii.

14. Protokoly MGSPS, 9, 1920, pp.36-7.

15. Obzor deyatel'nosti MGSPS, p.3.

16. ibid., p.8.



The caucus principle was applied to the trade unions in a similar way as in the soviets. The MK had a representative on the MSPS (central bureau) from its first meeting on 2 March 1917,<sup>17</sup> and on 5 May 1917 a party fraction was formed.<sup>18</sup> Thereafter the TU leadership in Moscow worked closely with the party committee. Party control was ensured through the party fraction in the MGSPS and individual unions. The relationship was codified by an MK instruction of 28 August 1919. All major TU questions were to be decided by the MSPS fraction after initial consultation with the MK. In a move designed to counter any attempts at Bolshevik TU fraction autonomy the instruction stressed that all Bolshevik trade union activists were under the same obligations of party discipline as any other party member and were at the disposal of the MK. This point was mitigated by allowing that transfers of personnel were to take place with the knowledge of the TU party fraction. All collegia and boards were to be appointed by the party organisation, the MSPS fraction was to give monthly reports to the MK bureau, and there was to be mutual representation on the party and TU fraction bureau.<sup>19</sup> These measures were confirmed by the party statute adopted in December 1919 which reiterated the principle of fraction subordination to party organisations.<sup>20</sup>

17. MSPS v 1917g., p.5.

18. Velikaya Oktyabr'skaya sotsialisticheskaya revolyutsiya. Dokumenty i materialy. Revolyutsionnoe dvizhenie v Rossii v aprele 1917g. April'skii krizis. M. 1958, pp.41-42.

19. P, 2 September 1919.

20. VIII konferentsiya RKP(b), dekabr' 1919g.: protokoly, M. 1961, pp.231-2.

Party reports of the period stressed the control of the MK over the MGSPS. For instance, the report for September 1920 stated that the list of MGSPS presidium members had been approved by the MK and that a plan of its work had been checked by the MK.<sup>21</sup> While the economic bodies largely evaded party control in the localities, a facet of glavkism, the trade unions were under detailed supervision, facilitated by their centralised organisation. In practice MK involvement in the MGSPS centred on the MK's right to dispose of personnel, which in a period of acute manpower shortage took on central importance. These factors together with personal links and mutual representation between the party and the unions, meant that during the period of the trade union discussion from the end of 1920 the MGSPS and its presidium did not challenge the party's dominance.

b. Bolshevisation

Throughout the civil war the communist party waged a campaign to bring all the unions under their control. The issue was not so much over the forms that unions should take, since the Mensheviks agreed with the principle of a single production union for each industry, but over the relationship of the unions to the state. In June 1918, for example, the I all-Russian congress of the employees' union passed a Menshevik-inspired resolution urging a single production union for each industry, but in another called for the unions to defend the class interests of the working class independent of the state 'guided in its

21 Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., M. 1920, p.4 In July 1920, for example, there was only one Menshevik out of over 100 people in the MGSPS, Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., M. 1920, p.3.

activity by the principles of the international class struggle of the proletariat'.<sup>22</sup>

Already in early summer 1918 the Mensheviks had played an active part in the 'non-party worker conferences' and 'conferences of factory and plant delegates' (soveshchaniya upolnomochennykh fabrik i zavodov). The aims of the movement were encapsulated in the resolution passed in the Bogatyr' plant on 16 May 1918: against the civil war and Bolshevik supply policies; for the convocation of a freely elected Constituent Assembly; for freedom of speech and meeting; the restoration of the municipal authorities; and for an end to the shooting of citizens and workers.<sup>23</sup> Lenin's assertion at the IV Moscow factory committee conference on 28 June 1918 that the movement was backed by only a very small number of workers<sup>24</sup> was belied by his admission earlier that month that 'the agitation of enemies and "waverers"' had had some influence on Moscow's workers.<sup>25</sup> The high point of the movement was the organisational meeting of 5 June 1918, attended by about 4000 workers,<sup>26</sup> whose ultimate aim was the convention of a national conference. By the end of the

22. I vserossiiskii s"ezd profsoyuzov sluzhashchikh (June 1918), M. 1918, p.9.

23. M.S. Bernshtam (ed), Issledovaniya noveishei russkoi istorii, vol.2, Nezavisimoe rabochee dvizhenie v 1918 godu, dokumenty i materialy, YMCA Press, Paris 1981, pp.145-6.

24. Lenin PSS, vol.37, pp.90-1.

25. Lenin PSS, vol. 50, p.90. In late May 1918 Martov had claimed at a session of VTsIK that the supply detachments had been used 'to remove from Petrograd and Moscow all discontented workers... and thus strangle the healthy protest of the working class', quoted by Israel Getzler, Martov: A Political Biography, CUP 1967, p.180.

26. Bernshtam, p.185.

month the upolnomochennyi movement had lost its momentum in the face of severe repression<sup>27</sup> and was engulfed by the civil war. Among the railway workers support lingered with sporadic strikes and resolutions in favour of the Constituent Assembly, and even in December 1918 'anti-soviet' soviets were being purged.<sup>28</sup>

Non-Bolshevik parties retained their support in several Moscow unions throughout the civil war. The anarchists had some influence in the bakers' union, but it was the Mensheviks who presented the greatest challenge in the print and chemicals unions, and to some extent in the office workers' union, not to mention on the railways. The Menshevik strongholds were in the Bogatyr' chemical plant in Sokol'nicheskii raion, where they retained their influence until 1920,<sup>29</sup> the Aleksandrov railway, and the Bromlei metal plant, where they dominated up to December 1921.<sup>30</sup> The factory committee of the Dukat tobacco plant in Presnenskii raion was dominated by the Mensheviks until the end of July 1918.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, Presnenskii raion was one of the few raions where the Mensheviks had widespread support. Apart from the above plant they were also strong in the giant Prokhorovskaya

27. Moscow was placed on a war footing on 29 May 1918 (Dekrety, vol.2, p.343) and street meetings and demonstrations were banned. In an appeal to the population the next day the SNK promised that 'counter-revolution' in the city would be suppressed, ibid., pp.360-2.

28. P, 1 December 1918.

29. Desyat' let: sbornik materialov Yu.O.K. Sokol'nicheskogo raiona - k 10-letiyu oktyabr'skoi revolyutsiii, M. 1927, p.60. In January 1919 the plant employed 5300 people, 2260 of whom were women and 700 juveniles, loc.cit.

30. KT, 17 December 1921.

31. P, 1 August 1918.

mill.<sup>32</sup> In mid-1918 the Bolsheviks were excluded from the factory committees and control commissions in several plants including Guzhon itself, the Postavshchik and Gnom i Rom plants.<sup>33</sup>

The formation of the one-party state (discussed below) was not restricted to the expulsion of non-Bolshevik parties from the soviets but included the destruction of their organised influence in worker organisations. This was achieved in its entirety only after the end of the civil war when the bolsheviks could concentrate their resources on this battle. The most important example of this was the battle waged throughout the war for control of the printworkers' union. Among the reasons for Menshevik support in the union the following can be briefly mentioned: a highly developed sense of solidarity in a traditionally skilled and cohesive profession; the relative success of the Menshevik leadership in defending the interests of their members vis-à-vis the Moscow soviet and the economic organs; the type of union organisation which allowed a responsive relationship between the leaders and the membership, evidenced above all by the existence of a 'council of delegates' (sovet upolnomochennykh); and the popularity of the Menshevik leadership in the print shops.

In 1918 the Bolsheviks were split over tactics: whether to contest the elections in the existing union or to form their own, the successful tactic with the railway union. Unsure of sufficient support the Bolsheviks attempted to win control of the

32. Vechernyaya krasnaya gazeta, 61, 28 September 1918.

33. Ignat'ev, p.150.

existing union and contested the elections to the board in April 1918. Out of 20,000 Moscow print workers 50% voted, only 4000 for the Bolsheviks who received 10 out of the 25 seats on the board.<sup>34</sup> By the end of the year the Bolsheviks called for new elections to the board hoping for a majority. The Menshevik refusal of 2 January 1919 led to a series of stormy meetings, which came to a head at a general meeting of Moscow print workers on 9 February 1919. The Bolsheviks were violently attacked at the meeting and accused of treachery to the duly constituted union bodies. Finding themselves in a minority they stormed out and finally decided to form a temporary board of a new union.<sup>35</sup> The move was supported by the MK meeting on 22 February 1919 when Borshchevskii, the leader of the Bolshevik print workers, and Mel'nichanskii reported on the situation in the union. On the grounds that the union was a 'citadel of Menshevism' the meeting urged the MSPS to create a new union.<sup>36</sup>

The creation of a new union moved slowly but by August 1919 a new Bolshevik national union had been formed, but in Moscow the Mensheviks still dominated.<sup>37</sup> Elections to the Moscow print TU board in December 1919 confirmed the Menshevik supremacy. Out of 12,000 print workers in Moscow 9000 voted, 7000 for the 'yellow' union and 2000 for the 'red'.<sup>38</sup> It appears that following this

34. Pechatnik, 5, 31 May 1918, pp.6-7.

35. Moskovskii pechatnik, 1, 15 January 1921, p.6; Pechatnik, 1-2, 15 January 1919, p.3.

36. Moskovskii pechatnik, 1, 15 January 1921, p.7.

37. The Petrograd union had been taken over by the Bolsheviks in November 1918, Pechatnik, 1-2, 25 January 1919.

38. VIMS, 25 December 1919.

defeat the Bolshevik print workers in Moscow rejoined the main union and continued the struggle from within. The strategy was outlined at the MK meeting on 20 December 1919 when the party raion committees (RKs) were urged to continue the struggle and Borshchevskii was assigned to recall all Bolshevik print workers to aid in the struggle.<sup>39</sup> At the height of the Polish war the board of the Moscow print union was dissolved by fiat of MGSPS on 18 June 1920<sup>40</sup> and measures were taken to conduct a purge of the union.<sup>41</sup> A long and bitter struggle now ensued, with over 25 strikes in Moscow print shops<sup>42</sup> and the arrest by the MChK of 11 members of the Moscow print board elected in December 1919 and a number of other Menshevik leaders.<sup>43</sup> From this point the story is difficult to follow, but apparently despite the repression the Mensheviks retained control of the Moscow print union until the beginning of NEP.<sup>44</sup>

The campaign to eliminate the organised forces of the peasant anarchist leader Nestor Makhno in the Ukraine was accompanied by repression against anarchist influence in the Moscow unions. This culminated in mass arrests in November 1920 of anarchist unionists, including the leaders of the bakers' union.<sup>45</sup> The board of the bakers' union in Moscow was dissolved

39. P, 20 December 1919.

40. P, 23 June 1920.

41. KT, 19 June 1920.

42. KT, 25 June 1920.

43. Sotsialisticheskii vestnik (SV), 1, 1 February 1921, p.15; 2, 16 February 1921, p.15.

44. Profsoyuzy Moskvyy, M. 1975, p.156.

45. Victor Serge, Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901-1941, OUP 1967, (trans Peter Sedgwick), p.122.

and reorganised with a Bolshevik majority.<sup>46</sup> The Menshevik-led Moscow chemical workers' union still remained obdurate, however, and the Menshevik board was careful to maintain close links with its supporters in the Moscow chemical plants by organising fortnightly meetings with factory committee representatives and by a variety of other means,<sup>47</sup> including the intensive application of bonus forms of payment which allowed wages to rise faster than in other industries (below and Appendix 11) The union elected Martov instead of Lenin as their honorary chairman on 26 March 1921.<sup>48</sup>

With the arrest of Menshevik and SR leaders in early 1921 it was relatively easy for the Bolsheviks, supported by the central trade union leadership, to eliminate the remnants of non-Bolshevik union leadership in Moscow by the end of the year.<sup>49</sup> At the same time the trade unions and the party cells worked together to gain control of the factory committees still in non-Bolshevik hands (Chapter 6). It was the new circumstances of peace and the NEP that saw the final elimination of this breach in Bolshevik hegemony.

46. Harrison, Marooned, p.73. Anarchist influence in the food workers' union is described by Paul Avrich, The Russian Anarchists, New York 1978, p.223.

47. KT, 6 March 1921.

48. Schapiro, p. 203.

49. At the IV guberniya chemical TU conference in early October 1921, for instance, the majority of the 202 delegates were 'independent' (129), and a resolution was passed defending the independence of the unions. The Bolshevik delegation of 91 left the conference and founded their own union, which was accredited by the MGSPS, KT, 4, 7 October 1921.



c. Wages and rations

The central dilemma of the unions in their relationship with their members was the ambiguity between their state role and their traditional one of defending the interests of the workers. Nowhere was the contradiction more sharp than in wages policy. Because of the predominance of the low-wage textile industry, wages in Moscow before the war were lower than elsewhere. The average annual income of a Moscow worker in 1913 was 253 rubles, rising to 256 rubles in 1914.<sup>50</sup> The highest wages were in the print, metal and power industries which employed the highest proportion of skilled male labour, and the lowest in the chemical and food industries. Appendix 11 shows that wages rose from an average 28 rubles per month in 1913 (in fact it was lower) to 153 rubles in 1917, thereafter rising rapidly to over 11,000 rubles a month at the end of 1920, a 400-fold increase over 1913 on average, and in the chemical industry nearly double that.

Between 1913 and the end of 1920 prices had increased by just under 25,000 times.<sup>51</sup> On these figures prices had therefore outstripped wages by 62 times.<sup>52</sup> In other words the purchasing power of factory workers by the end of 1920 had fallen by more than 50 times in comparison with 1913. However, such a

50. In Petrograd 339 and 376 rubles, and the average for all of Russia 264 and 371 rubles, respectively, Byulleten' MGSPS, 2 (15), 15 February 1922, p.6.

51. Calculated from the range of foods in Appendix 12 on the free market. With the destruction of the free market after October 1917 fixed prices had only a conditional accounting significance.

52. 52 times according to another source, Byulleten' statistiki truda moskovskoi gubernii, MGSPS, 5-6, March-April 1921, p.6.

conclusion has only formal significance. Beginning in 1918, and even more in 1919-20, wages were increasingly paid in kind and rations at fixed, purely nominal, prices became increasingly important. According to Strumilin the role of money wages decreased from 90% in 1917, 52% in 1918, 23% in 1919, to 7% in 1920.<sup>53</sup> In 1913 money wages covered the cost of food for one worker by 3.7 times, whereas in the last third of 1920 wages, including the nominal cost of rations at fixed prices, covered 42-49% of this norm, so the fall in real wages was 373:42-49, about 8 times.<sup>54</sup>

The end of 1918 saw attempts by the party leadership to stabilise the currency so that it could retain its functions as a medium of exchange.<sup>55</sup> At the same time many of the leaders and the rank and file in Moscow were demanding the abolition of money.<sup>56</sup> This conflict was only apparently one between pragmatism and idealism. The failure to restrain the

53. Cited by Yarotskii, p.259. In Moscow money wages in the first third of 1920 comprised 16% of the wages of workers receiving special rations, and 20% for general workers. By the end of the year this had fallen to 15 and 18%, respectively (Byulleten' stat. truda, 5-6, p.8). The figures are higher than Strumilin's because the issue of goods of own production, the issue of trade unions and other organisations, and the contribution of public feeding are not included.

54. Byulleten' stat. truda, 5-6, p.11. The question of family upkeep is not included.

55. R.W. Davies, The Development of the Soviet Budgetary System, CUP 1958, p.26.

56. In October 1918 Shlyapnikov argued that the naturalisation of wages was a process similar to that of the development of workers' control: as the only way of saving the masses from hunger (VIMS, 15 October 1918). The party programme adopted at the VIII party congress (section 15) declared the intention to eliminate money, though not immediately. On the abolition of money and the transition to a 'budget in kind' see, R.W. Davies, op cit, p.40; Carr, 2, pp.261-8.

inflation, with the amount of money in circulation more than doubling every year between 1917 and 1920, and to develop an efficient exchange mechanism between town and country, in itself destroyed money as a means of exchange and led to the naturalisation of wages. The state gradually moved towards a system of free distribution, defined by the SNK decree of 16 August 1920 on free travel and 11 October 1920 on free food and housing. On the eve of the NEP (3 February 1921) taxes were abolished. During war communism the payment of wages in kind was a means of distributing scarce resources on the 'living minimum' principle: if there had been sufficient goods and an effective distribution system hard prices alone would have sufficed.

The manner of supply was to play an increasingly large part in the attempt to stimulate productivity and to retain skilled workers. From 30 April 1920 ear-marked supply (tselevoe snabzhenie), formulated by the III TU congress earlier that month, began to be applied in Moscow. Special rations were issued depending on the state importance of the enterprise where the worker was employed (the principle of udarnosti) and according to the productivity of individual groups within them.<sup>57</sup> The aim was to forge a link between the social wage (especially rations) and the productivity of labour under conditions of an increasing separation of income budget from production.<sup>58</sup> In the

57. Byulleten' stat. truda, 5-6, p.6. Under the NEP the system developed into 'collective supply' based on each factory.

58. Strumilin calculated that the proportion of income budget linked to production fell from 42.5% in 1918; 16% in 1919; to 6.2% in 1920, Yarotskii, p.263.

circumstances the attempt to link rations to productivity, as in the introduction of a 'labour ration' to be issued only to those who actually worked, by the Moscow soviet in February 1920, could achieve little.<sup>59</sup>

At the same time the increased use of bonuses and piece rates was an attempt to use the other main component of wages (money) as a mechanism to increase productivity. From 1918 there had been attempts to link wages to productivity by sanctioning piece rates and norming, but at first they were not extensively applied. The egalitarian mood was captured by a certain Biryakov, supported by other deputies, at the 23 January 1919 Moscow soviet plenum when he called for complete equality.<sup>60</sup> However, contrary to the common impression that war communism was a period of planned uravnilovka (egalitarianism or wage levelling) 1919-21 saw an opening up of differentials in Moscow by a decrease in the 55 union tariffs of late 1918<sup>61</sup> to 12 in early 1921.<sup>62</sup> In 1920 major inequalities developed in the payment of money wages. The percentage of man hours covered by bonus systems of money payment rose from 40.6 in January to 65.9 in November; over the same period the percentage paid by piece rates rose from 6.7 to 15, and correspondingly the hours paid by basic time fell from 52.7 to 19.<sup>63</sup> Over the year wages rose fastest where piece rates were applied, followed by bonus systems, while basic rates increased by only 2-2.5 times.<sup>64</sup>

59. KM, col.12.

60. Stenotchety MS, 1, 1919, p.14.

61. KM, col.684.

62. Obzor deyatel'nosti MGSPS, M. 1921, p.48.

63. Byulleten' stat. truda, 5-6, p.1.

64. ibid., p.2.

The high earning piece and bonus systems were not applied equally to all industries and the lowest wages were found where basic rates predominated, such as the food industry where in November 1920 80.3% of man-hours were on basic wages, and the highest wages where piece and bonus systems were more extensively applied, such as the chemical industry.<sup>65</sup> There were therefore great variations in wages between the various categories of labour within industries, by decreasing the number of tariffs, but also great inequalities between industries because of differential money wages. The range of money wages had almost doubled from the 1913 ratio of 1:1.6 to 1:2.8 by December 1920 (Appendix 11) Rationing, of course, made for greater equality than these figures would suggest, but this in itself ensured that fairness in rationing became a highly emotive issue. .

War communism in Moscow was therefore accompanied not by the equalisation of money wages but by an increase in inequality as the general system of shock work was introduced. At the same time the attempt to apply material incentives in late 1920 was hampered by the lack of supplies, but was nevertheless increasingly used.<sup>66</sup> Gimpel'son argues that the use of incentives and the national reduction in the wage scale only from 1-5 to 1-4 indicate that war communism was never fully achieved.<sup>67</sup> It could be argued, however, that war communism retained a certain amount of flexibility in tackling economic

65. Byulleten' stat. truda, 5-6, p.3.

66. In October 1920 18 enterprises with 12,908 workers received bonuses in kind in the city and guberniya; by December 1920 this had risen to 160 enterprises with 107,350 workers, obzor deyatel'nosti MGSPS, pp.47-8.

67. Quoted in Malle, p.23.

problems, and indeed the above account indicates that coercion, considered the hallmark of war communism, was not incompatible with the application of inducements.<sup>68</sup> War communism was a period of experimentation and many of its labour and wages aspects were carried over to the following period.

With money losing its value and a shortage of skilled and unskilled workers, economic bodies and factory managements resorted to increasing wages arbitrarily in order to keep scarce labour and thus infringed the set rates. This was a problem not only in industry but, as Polidorov (chairman of the Moscow guberniya soviet EC) informed the IX party congress, all the commissariats and even the local party organisation in Moscow were guilty of this in order to attract competent employees to their service.<sup>69</sup>

Aware of the dangers of unfair rationing the MGSPS waged a vigorous campaign to ensure equality in general ration distribution which ran counter to the principle of udarnosti and the attempt to retain skilled workers. In particular, the MGSPS tried to limit the issue of goods of own production (e.g., bread to bakers) which gave some groups an unfair advantage over others. As it was, the skilled groups of metal and print workers had slipped in the wages league. The importance of the accurate issue of rations, to avoid disturbances developing on this basis, led to the creation of a permanent commission under the MK in

68. Cf. Alec Nove, 'Socialism, Centralised Planning and the One-Party State', in T.H. Rigby, Archie Brown and Peter Reddaway (eds), Authority, Power and Policy in the USSR, Macmillan 1980, pp.77-97.

69. IX s"ezd RKP, p.73.

early 1920 to oversee ration policy in all its forms.<sup>70</sup>

In the factories and plants a bitter struggle developed over the issue of goods produced on the premises as part of wages, especially in the food and tobacco industries.<sup>71</sup> Despite the unpopularity of its position amongst those who benefitted from this issue, the MGSPS argued that such issue as part of wages contradicted the basic principle of equality and the 'living minimum' for all.<sup>72</sup> Only with the introduction of NEP were concessions made in this field, though illegal issue clearly took place in order to retain workers and to minimise theft.

By the end of 1920 disturbances did develop over the question of inequality in general and not just over the privileges of the specialists. In response the MGSPS attempted to decrease the variations in wages and the numbers on special rations.<sup>73</sup> The MGSPS was caught in the horns of the dilemma of attempting to keep rations fair, while trying to stimulate productivity, and hence it relied on the money part of wages to maintain productivity. Under war communism and the attendant scarcity the policy of incentives was not only ineffective but also politically dangerous.

70. Protokoly MGSPS, 30, p.15.

71. Stenotchety MS, 16, 1919, pp.246, 258; KT, 25 March 1920. There were 20,000 tobacco workers at this time, and tobacco acted as a second, more stable, currency.

72. Protokoly MGSPS, 18, 1920, p.9; 29, 1920, p.13.

73. Obzor deyatel'nosti MGSPS, p.48.

d. Economic management

Following the June 1918 nationalisation decree the trade unions in conjunction with the SNKh were to participate in the formation of the new management boards of enterprises. At first the collegiate boards, in which the unions participated, took on a variety of forms. The boards were responsible to the SNKh for work fulfilment and finances, while the trade unions were responsible for labour discipline, wage norming, and other tasks. Already the I all-Russian TU congress of January 1918 had insisted on the subordination of the factory committees to the unions. The transition from workers' control to state management was as drawn out a process as nationalisation itself. The key point, however, was that the management of enterprises was not transferred to the unions but to the economic bodies.

In contrast to Petrograd and elsewhere there was no city-wide factory committee organisation in Moscow,<sup>74</sup> and attempts to form such a coordinating body in early 1918 were not successful.<sup>75</sup> Its functions continued to be carried out by the departments of workers' control (control commissions) under the raion soviets. Following the nationalisation decree these departments were transformed into the local control organs of MOSNKh and a city control commission was formed under it to coordinate their work.<sup>76</sup> In some enterprises factory committees

74. There was a council of workers' control covering the central Industrial Region which was considered subordinate to the Moscow soviet, E. Al'perovich, 'Ot rabocheho kontrolya k pervym shagam promyshlennogo stroitel'stva', in Ocherki po istorii oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii v Moskve, M. 1927, p.148.

75. MSPS v 1917g. p.135.

76. Izvestiya MOSNKh, 1, 1 September 1918, p.3.



elected control commissions to which MOSNKh sent its representatives, which then became the kernel of collegiate management.<sup>77</sup> A statute adopted by the VTsSPS and MSPS on 2 August 1918 defined the factory committees as the cells of the TUs<sup>78</sup> and the control commissions as responsible to the SNKh.<sup>79</sup> In this way the factory committees were fractured: the factory committees came under the TUs and their control commissions under the economic bodies. This split was the specific manifestation of the fact that the management of industry was to be conducted not by the TUs but by economic agencies. The TUs themselves gradually lost any direct management functions. By April 1919, for example, the functions of the Moscow metalworkers' union (VSRM) control commission had been transferred to the MGSNKh.<sup>80</sup>

The aims and functions of the unions and workers' control in nationalised enterprises were enunciated in a resolution adopted by the Moscow VSRM plenum of 20 July 1918. The duties of the union and its cell the factory committee were to be restricted to ensuring internal order and labour discipline and not to interfere in management: 'The organs of workers' control...must not carry out any administrative or economic functions'.<sup>81</sup> As we shall see later, precisely the same restrictions were placed on the activities of party cells in the factories. The instruction

77. This was the case in the Til'mans screw plant, Izvestiya MOSNKh, 1, p.23.

78. A.M. Pankratova, Istoriya razvitiya fabzav. predstavitel'stva i fabzav. komitetov v Rossii, M. 1924, p.89.

79. Izvestiya MOSNKh, 2, 15 September 1918.

80. VIMS, 11 April 1919.

81. TsGAOR, 7952/3/212/197-8.

in the event was to prove ambiguous. The state management of Guzhon, for example, now argued on its basis that the control commission in the plant was no longer necessary since both VSNKh and the management looked after the interests of the workers.<sup>82</sup> After a vigorous protest by the Guzhon control commission the union clarified that it had not called for its abolition.<sup>83</sup> The Guzhon argued was to be revived by Trotsky during the TU debate.

A major fillip to the centralisation of the unions, noted by Mel'nichanskii above, was the abolition of the raion trade union boards in late 1918. They had consisted of delegates from factories and paralleled the organisation in raion soviets of factory committee delegates. Both represented the high water mark of workers' democracy in 1917. In the second half of 1918 factory TU committees (mestkomy) became directly subordinate to the local TU branches without the intermediary raion organisations. These mestkomy were designed to replace the factory committees, but by early 1919 the process was still far from complete.<sup>84</sup> By the end of the war the mestkomy had become the primary union organisation in the factories<sup>85</sup> though the situation is confused because they often still called themselves factory committees.

Throughout the civil war, conflicts between the factory committees and the factory managements were endemic.<sup>86</sup> Both the

82. ibid., pp.231-2.

83. ibid., pp.228-30.

84. VIMS, 11 April 1919.

85. KM, col.679.

86. In the second half of 1918 in the city there were 3507 disputes (an average of 585 a month), usually over wages; in the first half of 1919 766 (average 128 a month); and in the second half of 1919 416 (average 67 a month), KM, col.684.

trade unions and the party RKs took part in resolving them.<sup>87</sup> The summary dissolution of the factory committee at the Moscow-Kazan railway printshop in March 1919, whether because of its Menshevik allegiance or as part of the militarisation of the railways is not clear, was followed by widespread strikes and is a case in point of the expendability of the factory committees in this period.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, factory committee members were an important group. In a proletarian raion such as Rogozhsko-Simonovskii there were 454 factory committee members by November 1919 in the 154 enterprises, 2.8% of the total number of workers.<sup>89</sup>

In the first period there were nearly as many variations in the management of nationalised enterprises as there were enterprises themselves. The Bogatyr' plant is fairly representative however, in having a board with 2 representatives from the workers, 2 from the technical staff, and 2 from VSNKh.<sup>90</sup> More democratic initially was the Til'mans plant where supreme authority was vested in a control commission consisting of management and factory committee representatives: the management was responsible for general administration while the factory committee was responsible for labour discipline and the attempts to raise productivity and both were subordinate to the control commission.<sup>91</sup> In other plants, such as Guzhon, a more centralised state board dominated from the first.

87. P, 11 July 1919.

88. Pechatnik, 3-4, 1 April 1919, p.11.

89. VIMS, 3 November 1919.

90. P, 5 January 1919

91. Izvestiya MOSNKh, 1, p.23.

Following Lenin's strictures against the 'chattering' of collegiate management and the resolutions on strengthening one-man management at the II SNKh congress in December 1918<sup>92</sup> there was increased pressure on collegiate management. The new policy was opposed by the VTsSPS<sup>93</sup> and the MGSPS urged caution in its implementation. Many party leaders were also wary of the move, above all in Moscow. It encountered the opposition of VSNKh and Democratic Centralists at the IX party congress, and MGK at the XVII guberniya party conference (13-14 March 1920)<sup>94</sup> and the March 1920 Moscow city party conference (Chapter 9). Defending collegiate management in a debate in the Moscow soviet on 28 January 1919, a certain Il'in put his finger on the problem when he argued that it had become difficult to 'use' the working class since its most active members had been destroyed by the war.<sup>95</sup>

The introduction of one-man management in 1919 in enterprises moved very slowly, and few examples can be found for its introduction in Moscow. In the great majority of factories some form of collegiate management was retained. 1920, however, against the background of militarisation policies, saw an acceleration in its introduction despite the opposition mentioned above.<sup>96</sup> In autumn 1920, for example, a special plenipotentiary

92. II s"ezd SNKh, pp.128-9.

93. e.g., on 15 August 1919 17 out of 23 people present voted against and 5 abstained, Gimpel'son (1977), p.39.

94. Ocherki istorii Moskovskoi organizatsii KPSS, vol.2, M. 1983, p.177.

95. Stenotchety MS, 3, 1919, p.39.

96. By December 1920 nationally out of 2483 enterprises under VSNKh 2183 (87.9%) had one-man management, and 300 collegiate, Iz ist. grazh. voiny, vol. 3, M. 1961, p.672.

was sent from Gomomez to Guzhon with extraordinary powers, though the collegiate board remained but now subordinate to him. Soon after he became the first 'red director' of Guzhon.<sup>97</sup>

It would appear that up to the end of 1920 the unions, at least in Moscow, were increasingly on the defensive vis-à-vis the party and state organisations. In a conflict with Rabkrin in mid-1920, for example, the MGSPS insisted that Rabkrin did not have the right to look into the affairs of factory committees, mestkomy and other higher trade union bodies and argued that this would be an infringement of internal union affairs.<sup>98</sup> At the same time the MGSPS insisted on its prerogatives as the representative of all Moscow unions. In the case of the conflict between the Moscow supply committee and the public feeding union the MGSPS insisted that as a matter of principle the Moscow soviet and the MK should deal with the MGSPS and not the individual union.<sup>99</sup> In this case the collective responsibility of unions took on a rather centralistic guise. In the circumstances this was inevitable given the extensive powers of the glavki. In the long-drawn out conflict provoked by the closure of a food plant (Bodlo) by a centre (Tsentrozhir) without consultation with any union the MGSPS riposted that 'any measures affecting workers and employees should be carried out with the knowledge and agreement of the corresponding trade union'.<sup>100</sup> Following

97. Bor'ba klassov, 7-8, 1934, p.189.

98. Protokoly MGSPS, 17, 1920, p.7; 23, 1920, p.17.

99. Protokoly MGSPS, 29, 1920, p.13.

100. Protokoly MGSPS, 17, 1920, p.8; Obzor deyatel'nosti MGSPS, p.22.

the assault on the anarchist bakers' union the Moscow soviet in October 1920 militarised all the bakeries without consulting the MGSPS.<sup>101</sup> Shortly afterwards the MGSPS was even more aggrieved when the factory committee in a cooking oil plant (Masloboinogo zavoda No.3) was arrested by the MChK and a new director was appointed without consulting the food union.<sup>102</sup>

The weakness of the Moscow unions was acknowledged by Briskin, the secretary of the MGSPS, at the II guberniya TU conference on 20 September 1920. He specifically pointed out the lack of permanent TU activists at the MGSPS, no more than 2-3 at any one time, supported by about 50 technical personnel, and the poor links with the lower union organisations and with the mass of the workers.<sup>103</sup> At that conference Davydova, responsible for cultural work, bewailed the ineffectiveness of cultural and educational work. There was confusion over the responsibilities of each body with Narkompros and its local organ MONO poaching any club, library or school established by the unions. As a result the TU centre was isolated from the proletariat.<sup>104</sup>

At the end of 1920 the MGSPS began to reassert itself. With the beginning of demobilisation the MGSPS waged a vigorous campaign to obtain TU activists directly from the front, albeit through the MK which had sole rights in distributing party members.<sup>105</sup> The party layer in the Moscow unions was extremely

101. Protokoly MGSPS, 13, 1920, p.50.

102. Protokoly MGSPS, 14, 1920, p.5.

103. KT, 21 September 1920.

104. KT, 23 September 1920; KM, col.685.

105. Protokoly MGSPS, 18, 1920, p.11; 30, 1920, p.15.

small group of communists at 2.4% of total membership, 6% of whom were employed by the trade unions themselves.<sup>106</sup> At the same time the secretariat of the MGSPS increased from the 56 in September 1920 to 165 in April 1920.<sup>107</sup> Apart from the secretariat the MGSPS had three other departments from September 1920: culture and education, labour, and an economic department. The first two need no comment but the formation of the economic department on 26 September 1920 after the decision of the II guberniya TU conference<sup>108</sup> marked an important stage in the revival of the trade unions.

The high hopes for a large role for the TUs in running production after the revolution were given concrete expression by the formation of an economic commission under the MSPS on 26 October 1917.<sup>109</sup> At the 15 November 1917 plenum Kozelev, the chairman of the Moscow metal TU, even argued that to avoid parallelism the economic department of the Moscow soviet should be abolished and its powers transferred to the MSPS.<sup>110</sup> This economic commission at some unknown stage disappeared, but now

106. In Moscow out of a TU membership of 689,763 in September 1920 (Appendix 10) only 16,763 were communists (2.4%). A total of 1042 communists (678 of whom were in the city) were employed in the movement, 664 of whom (540 in the city) were full-time union organisers (Table 16).

107. Obzor deyatel'nosti MGSPS, p.2.

108. Protokoly MGSPS, 7, 1920, p.30.

109. MSPS v 1917g., p.124.

110. ibid., p.131. To crown the MSPS's bouquet Kozelev hoped at the end of 1917 that the highest workers' control body should be formed under the MSPS (MSPS v 1917g., p.135); instead, as we have seen, MOSNKh took over this function later.

its revival was viewed by the MK with major reservations.<sup>111</sup> The struggle for the economic department to establish itself need not detain us, but the attempts to increase the role of the TUs in production were boosted by the success of Rudzutak's resolution at the V all-Russian TU conference (3-7 November 1920) on TU participation in economic management and planning. Even so, it was only on 19 January 1921 that the MGSPS achieved permanent representation on MSNKh.<sup>112</sup> From mid-1918 a large number of trade unionists were drafted into the economic organisations and many clearly retained personal links with their former union companions, but on the formal level the links between the MGSPS and MSNKh up to this point had been tenuous to say the least.

While the trade union debate raged the unions were de facto preparing themselves for the management of the economy. The MGSPS presidium on 21 December 1920 urged that a report be completed as soon as possible on various proposals for the participation of the TUs in the organisation of production,<sup>113</sup> but it does not seem to have reported its findings.

Against the background of worker unrest and the trade union debate the MGSPS and its constituent unions attempted to forge closer contacts with workers by holding meetings in the factories themselves.<sup>114</sup> The 5 January 1921 session of the MGSPS presidium called for a whole range of factory, delegate, raion

111. Protokoly MGSPS, 7, 1920, p.30.

112. Obzor deyatel'nosti MGSPS, p.5. With the transition to the NEP the MGSPS had a group of its representatives on MSNKh, from 22 March 1921, ibid., p.7.

113. Protokoly MGSPS, 33, 1920, p.21.

114. Protokoly MGSPS, 34, 1920, p.22: 37, 1921, p.4.



and inter-raion meetings of factory managers, trade unions, factory committees and workers to discuss economic questions.<sup>115</sup> In practice these democratic fora never really developed with any success and soon faded away. One practical gain of the TU movement, however, was the concession agreed between the MGSPS and the Moscow labour department at the end of January 1921 on trade union personnel. During the civil war the disposition of workers and cadres was a key question, and both the Workers' Opposition and the Ignatov group (Part III) had called for the TUs to have a voice in this.<sup>116</sup> Now the agreement stated that no elected member of a factory committee or mestkom could be fired, transferred to another enterprise or institution, or sent on assignments by managements without the permission of the relevant trade union.<sup>117</sup> The significance of these changes during the trade union debate within the framework of war communism changed with the radically new conditions inaugurated by the NEP.

Alfred Rosmer was in Moscow at this time and wrote later that the unions 'were like poor relations' with the available reserves of manpower and supplies going to the party.<sup>118</sup> And again, apropos of the trade union debate: 'Nobody basically disputed that the unions were in a state of semi-lethargy; the only difference of opinion was on the causes and cures'.<sup>119</sup> According to the Workers' Opposition, as Lutovinov put it, not only was the party bureaucratised but also the trade unions:

115. Protokoly MGSPS, 37, 1921, p.4.

116. P, 19 January 1921.                      117. P, 26 January 1921.

118. Alfred Rosmer, Lenin's Moscow, Pluto 1971, p.93.

119. ibid., p.117.

The trade unions are cut off from the healthy influence of the masses... The old methods of educating the broad masses by way of agitation and propaganda are being replaced by circulars and orders.<sup>120</sup>

The complaint of the Workers' Opposition that the TUs were overshadowed by the state and party was a valid one:

The practice of party centres and state organs in the last two years has systematically narrowed the range of the trade unions' work and has reduced to almost nothing the influence of workers' unions in the soviet state.<sup>121</sup>

As Lozovskii himself put it, 'Three years after the October revolution the Russian trade unions are further from managing production than they were in the months after the October revolution'.<sup>122</sup>

Rosmer's comments, together with Mel'nichanskii's quoted above, illustrate that by 1920 there was not only a general economic crisis but also a specific crisis of the trade unions. The centralised management of the economy was reflected in the centralisation of the unions. At the same time, the weight of the trade union hierarchy vis-à-vis the state and party bodies was relatively weak. Both these factors provide the essential background to understanding the trade union debate of late 1920. During the debate the unions introduced certain internal reforms and tried to reassert their economic role and powers. The ambiguous role of the unions in the Soviet state, as revealed in wages and rations policy, was not resolved during war communism, but a pattern of union subalternacy emerged which was confirmed following the trade union debate.

120. Vestnik truda, 11, December 1920, pp.11-14.

121. Partiya i soyuzy, Pbg, 1921, p.362.

122. ibid., p.166.

## 2. Universal labour duty

War communism was a hitherto almost unique experiment in abolishing unemployment, though under NEP it returned and by 1923 in Moscow had returned to the early 1918 level. Both the full employment of war communism and that of the period inaugurated by the five-year plans were accompanied by punitive measures against those who failed to work.

The disorganisation of the economy and the rundown in defence orders led to increasing unemployment from late 1917. The metal industries were particularly affected since their ability to redeploy to peacetime production was less than, for example, the textile industry. Metalworkers comprised one of the largest groups of unemployed, standing at 18,000 in early 1918.<sup>123</sup> During the civil war the working class to some extent disappeared from the factories, therefore with the development of the war and exodus from the city unemployment almost disappeared in the city. From a high point of 89,003 in spring 1918 (Appendix 5), a total which represented nearly 10% of the independent population, unemployment fell sharply to reach 27,783 in December of that year, 15,822 in June 1919,<sup>124</sup> and had dwindled to a few hundred in 1920. With the premium on skilled workers unemployment at first was only significant among female textile workers unable to leave the city because of family commitments.

By 1919-20 a severe shortage of skilled workers had developed, and of unqualified workers in industry and transport. In January 1920 for every 100 unemployed there were 123.3

123. Stat. ezhegodnik, p.207.

124. Piletskii, p.18.

vacancies in the city and guberniya, but the demand for labour was greater than these figures suggest. In June 1920 there were 5000 unfilled places for metalworkers, 50,000 for building workers, and 20,000 for unskilled workers.<sup>125</sup> In early September 1920 there were 30,154 vacancies registered for workers, and in that month alone this demand increased by 31%.<sup>126</sup> The labour shortage by November 1920 was such that Narkomtrud issued a list of jobs, such as tram conductors, postpersons, concierges, and so on, that were to be reserved for women between the ages of 16-50.<sup>127</sup> Such measures were inadequate and the government increasingly resorted to compulsory labour duty.

Labour duty was a basic principle of war communism and was incorporated into the Soviet constitution of 10 July 1918 and the labour code of 10 December 1918. In July 1918 Bukharin was already arguing that there would be 'bread only for toilers, and labour duty for the rich'.<sup>128</sup> When introduced labour duty was not restricted to the rich alone. An important step towards the social direction of labour and the first move away from free labour was the decree of 3 September 1918 abolishing the right of an unemployed worker to refuse the job offered to him or her on pain of loss of unemployment benefit. In 1919 the system of labour distribution developed in the military supply factories, transport and agriculture. A decree of 12 April 1919 prohibited the spontaneous movement of workers and employees from one place of work to another in an attempt to staunch the flow to the

125. KT, 24 June 1920.

126. Leites, p.150.

127. KT, 9 November 1920.

128. Vechernnyaya krasnaya gazeta, 3, 19 July 1918.

countryside.<sup>129</sup>

In 1918-19 labour duty was still largely a matter of principle despite the partial attempts to implement it. One of the major steps on this road was the introduction of labour books as a means of keeping track of workers and eliminating 'parasitism'. The idea of labour books had been mooted as early as September 1918,<sup>130</sup> though their introduction moved slowly. The Moscow soviet EC on 31 May 1919 urged their rapid introduction,<sup>131</sup> but the SNK decree on them restricted their introduction to Moscow and Petrograd. The intention of the books was to eliminate the vast army of 'speculators' noted above, to tie skilled workers to their jobs, and in general to control the labour market. By early 1920 every able-bodied Muscovite between the ages of 16 and 50 (40 for women) had exchanged their passport for a labour book without which it was impossible to obtain government housing, food or clothing. The person was also liable to arrest for labour desertion and a period of compulsory labour.<sup>133</sup>

The intensified use of existing labour resources was, Bukharin argued in December 1920, the only recourse in

129. G. Leggett, The Cheka: Lenin's Political Police, OUP 1981, p.241.

130. VIMS, 16 September 1918.      131. VIMS, 2 June 1919.

132. Izvestiya VTsIK, 28 June 1919; Dekrety, vol.5, pp.304-6.

133. Harrison, Marooned, p.95. Emma Goldman writes that the labour book 'was somewhat of the yellow ticket issued to prostitutes under the Tsarist regime. It was a record of every step one made, and without it no steps could be made. It bound its holder to his job, to the city he lived in, and to the room he occupied. It recorded one's political faith and party adherence, and the number of times he was arrested. In short, a yellow ticket. Even some communists resented the degrading innovation', Goldman, Disillusionment, p.109.

circumstances where the stock of worn-out machines could not be renewed by purchases from abroad.<sup>134</sup> It was at this time that Trotsky developed a general programme of militarisation of the economy (Part III). By early 1920 the system had developed beyond partial attempts at labour distribution into a scheme of universal compulsory labour duty effected by a central labour committee (Glavkomtrud), under the Council of Defence, and local committees. The scheme had been established by an SNK decree of 29 January 1920 and confirmed by the IX party congress.<sup>135</sup>

In March 1920 the Moscow city committee of labour duty (Moskomtrud) was established<sup>136</sup> with two main departments, mobilisation and the fight against labour desertion.<sup>137</sup> Its aims were 'to use the available labour' and to 'eliminate parasitism'.<sup>138</sup> Labour duty was obligatory for all healthy male citizens between the ages of 19-50, and women up to 40 except those with young children.<sup>139</sup> According to the committee there were 375,000 people in Moscow unaccounted for and living off unknown means: 'This mass comprises a hundred thousand Sukharevka, countless craft and domestic enterprises of a speculative type.' It estimated that labour duty would give 100-

134. P, 18 December 1920.

135. On labour duty, see Leggett, p.242; Dewar, pp.52-6-; Carr, 2, pp.211-8.

136. KT, 20 March 1920.

137. A.M. Anikst, Organizatsiya rabochei sily v 1920 godu, M. 1920, p.8.

138. Izvestiya Moskovskogo komiteta po trudovoi povinnosti, 5, 21 June 1920.

139. ibid., 8, 16 October 1920.

150,000 extra workers, as well as ridding the soviet apparatus of thousands of able-bodied workers.<sup>140</sup>

Moskomtrud was subordinate to the Moscow soviet EC and consisted of three people (a troika): a representative of the military commissariat, one from the soviet management body (upravlenie delami - which had taken over the practical functions of the soviet presidium), and one from the soviet labour department. The committee was only a directing body and all of its acts were to be implemented through existing bodies such as the labour departments, trade unions and military organs.<sup>141</sup> The absence of a TU representative once again indicates their low status, even though the III TU congress in April 1920 charged unions to ensure that jobs were not changed arbitrarily and to combat absenteeism.<sup>142</sup> The use of the MGSPS for labour duty further alienated workers from it. When the MGSPS, for example, in November 1920 ordered the transfer of 79 workers from the Danilovskii to the Prokhorovskii mill at the request of Moskomtrud it aroused a storm of protest against itself.<sup>143</sup> Troiki were formed in the raions of Moscow<sup>144</sup> and by the time of the II guberniya TU conference in September 1920 every quarter of

140. KT, 5 May 1920. The census of August 1920, which was fairly reliable, revealed that this estimate, calculated on the basis of the issue of ration cards, was a massive exaggeration: only 60,000 non-labouring people were accounted for (KT, 17 December 1920), though by then the activities of Moskomtrud may have had some effect, and also, on the day of the census 'non-labouring elements' may have gone to ground.

141. Izvestiya MK po trud. pov., 5, 21 June 1920.

142. KT, 20 march 1920.

143. Protokoly MGSPS, 20, 1920, p.12.

144. KT, 25 March 1920.

the city and guberniya was covered by a network of 993 labour commissions.<sup>145</sup> Attempts to form labour desertion committees in the factories were abandoned on the grounds that they would weaken the already feeble factory committees (mestkomy).<sup>146</sup>

In all between February and October 1920 Moskomtrud organised 308,400 worker days in Moscow guberniya, and 167,516 in the city (excluding cartage). The work centred on fuel, unloading, market gardening, and unskilled work on the railways and enterprises. The committee had also mobilised back to work 2780 construction workers, 171 water workers, 700 metal craftsmen, 2400 tailoring craftsmen (the last two groups being sent into state enterprises), and 1060 people were drafted from the villages to work in the fuel body (Moskvotop).<sup>147</sup> In all, by the end of the year about 8625 workers had been mobilised in Moscow.<sup>148</sup>

The figures in fact belie the work of Moskomtrud. Its major campaign was to return building workers from the country to the city in the first large-scale attempt at labour mobilisation to deal with the area of the greatest labour shortage. The war department was closely involved and therefore it was a test case of the use of the army apparatus on the home front. In the event between June and October 1920 only 3591 building workers were sent to Moscow, and from the above figures not all arrived. The report on the campaign admitted that 'We must concede the

145. KT, 24 September 1920. 146. Anikst (1920), p.55.

147. Izvestiya MK po trud. pov., 8, 16 October 1920.

148. A. Bubnov (ed), Grazhdanskaya voina, 1918-1921gg., M. 1928, Appendix 11.



complete failure of this labour mobilisation'.<sup>149</sup> Since the mobilisation affected only one industry workers took cover under another. Nevertheless, the TsK in October 1920 was still calling for the 'systematic extraction of skilled workers who have settled in the countryside'.<sup>150</sup> No greater success met the committee in its other major campaign, waged in conjunction with the MGSPS and Rabkrin: the attempt to shake out the offices and to return 'surplus' employees to the factories.<sup>151</sup> No appreciable fall in the number of office workers was registered.

The attempt at labour mobilisation in Moscow cannot be judged a success in terms of the objectives it had set itself and few extra workers were made available for Moscow's factories. The end of unemployment was achieved at the price of the end of free labour but even militarisation under war communism could achieve little. The labour process of war communism did not eschew coercion, but coercion, in conditions of scarcity, proved unable to secure sufficient labour or increase productivity. The main effect of the militarisation of labour was to intensify worker alienation from continuing the war communist forced march to socialism.

### 3. Productivity and labour discipline

From 1917 there was a steady, and at times dramatic, fall in labour productivity. The decline appears to have been little affected by rations or wages policies, or indeed by militarisation and attempts at improving discipline.

149. Anikst (1920), pp.32, 34. 150. P, 9 October 1920.

151. KT, 14 September 1920; Protokoly MGSPS, 24, 1920, p.20.

Productivity had already fallen dramatically in 1917 when, for example, in the the Guzhon plant in that year wages rose by 300-400% while productivity fell by 40-70%.<sup>152</sup> By 1920 productivity per worker in that plant had fallen to 9.5% of the 1913-14 level by weight, and 8% by value (Appendix 13). P.G. Smidovich, at the time chairman of the city SNKh, informed the Moscow soviet EC on 19 January 1920 that in the previous year productivity had halved in Moscow with most industries fulfilling less than half their allotted tasks.<sup>153</sup> Output per worker in Moscow between 1913 and 1920 fell from 2781 pre-war rubles per annum to 713.<sup>154</sup>, a quarter of the 1913 level.

There were many reasons for the decline. They include disruptions in raw material and fuel supplies, the time spent in queues, the search for fuel, trips to the countryside in search of food, and so on. In these circumstances absenteeism naturally increased and was an indicator of the break-down of the legal economy. In every plant the management issued warnings against taking days off without permission. One such in the Guzhon plant on 23 December 1918 called on heads of departments to take action against absenteeism and stated that written reasons must be presented for an absence of even one day.<sup>155</sup> In the Til'mans plant in late 1918 a guard was placed on the factory gates to check on workers arriving late and to prevent people leaving early.<sup>156</sup> In the last third of 1919 absenteeism in Moscow

152. VIMS, 7 September 1918.      153. VIMS, 20 January 1920.

154. Moskovskii soviet za desyat' let raboty 1917-1927gg., M. 1927, p.19.

155. TsGAOR, 7952/3/212/274.      156. Izvestiya MOSNKh, 1, p.24.

factories reached 25% (one day off in every three worked), lower where food supplies were better as in the food industry itself.<sup>157</sup> In March 1920 absenteeism on some Moscow railway lines reached 80% a week,<sup>158</sup> and in April in the factories absenteeism averaged 44% a week. The factory committees were urged to take severe measures to improve the situation,<sup>159</sup> but disciplinary actions alone were insufficient when faced with desperate food shortages. In September 1920 absenteeism remained at the 40-50% level of the enrolled workers as they searched for food on the black market.<sup>160</sup>

The norming of labour, the organisation of piece rates, the payment of bonuses, were all attempts to increase productivity, as were the early attempts at organising socialist emulation. But increasingly reliance was placed on elements of labour discipline external to the labour process: the Cheka, the party committees, the local soviets, and the whole weight of the agitprop apparatus inflating the cult of labour in socialist society. The IX party congress in a resolution stated that it

views as one of the urgent tasks of the Soviet government and the trade unions a planned, systematic, persistent and implacable campaign against labour desertion, in particular by the publication of lists of deserters who have been punished, and the formation of punitive brigades composed of deserters, or as a last resort, their confinement in concentration camps.<sup>161</sup>

In Moscow's factories 'red lists', extolling labour heroes, and 'black boards', excoriating slackers, appeared. Various commissions

157. KM, col.187.

158. KT, 11 May 1920.

159. KT, 3 April 1920.

160. Malle, p.597.

161. KPSS v rezolyutsiakh i resheniyakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK, vol.2, M. 1970, p.192.

were established to combat labour desertion, to use the contemporary term, in various industries, such as one for transport in Moscow in May 1920 with the brief to use both repression and agitation.<sup>162</sup>

In 1920 the movement of comrade-disciplinary courts developed on the basis of the SNKh decree of 14 November 1919, though earlier versions had existed. The III TU congress of April 1920 approved their formation under the TUs, and by May 1920 they were functioning under 19 of the 22 Moscow unions. Because of their militarisation they were not formed under the railway and water workers' unions.<sup>163</sup> Their main task was to ensure discipline among workers and initially technical and administrative staff were excluded from their purview.<sup>164</sup> As Mel'nichanskii said, 'They were useful in getting the workers to fulfil labour norms, and to enforce the labour discipline established by the trade unions'.<sup>165</sup> Between 1 January and 1 December 1920, for example, the court under the metal TU heard 2151 cases, in 1341 of which there were acquittals and 810 convictions, with the greatest involving absenteeism, followed by sabotage and indiscipline.<sup>166</sup> The punishments included extra work, firing, docking of wages or non-issue of rations. In January 1921 346 cases were heard by all the union courts in the guberniya and city, in February 762, and a peak of 1112 was reached in March 1921 at a time of maximum disturbances in the

162. KT, 11 May 1920.

163. KT, 11 May 1920; KM, col.685.

164. IV Mosk. gub. konf. profsoyuzov, p.11.

165. ibid., p.16.

166. KT, 22 December 1920.

city.<sup>167</sup> An attempt by the official legal system (Narsud-Chapter 6) to encroach on the prerogatives of these courts was repulsed by a conference of representatives of the disciplinary courts on 10 February 1921. The meeting insisted that all questions of a purely production character were to be decided only in the factories. In keeping with the anti-specialist mood of the times the conference extended the jurisdiction of the courts to administrative and technical personnel,<sup>168</sup> which may account for some of the increased cases brought in March.

The latter democratic measure was clearly part of the response to the growing wave of protest in the city directed partially against the harsh discipline in factories. Another response was the formation of disciplinary courts not attached to the unions to judge not only labour desertion but also 'bureaucracy'. One of these was formed in Rogozhsko-Simonovskii raion in the first days of 1921 by the party RK with both prosecutors and defenders available.<sup>169</sup>

The measures described above indicate some of the first responses to the perennial problem of ensuring labour discipline and productivity under the conditions of a state-run economy. In keeping with the general authoritarian tenor of war communism under conditions of civil war and scarcity these measures tended to rely on coercion since the state had few incentives to offer. Despite the use of the courts and other disciplinary methods absenteeism remained high and productivity low.

167. Byulleten' MGSPS, 1, 23 January 1921, pp.8-9.

168. KT, 15 February 1921.

169. KT, 14 January 1921.

#### 4. Labour protest in Moscow

Throughout the civil war there was an underlying current of labour militancy in Moscow, and this was not restricted to the intra-plant conflicts discussed above. As Ziegler has recently put it:

The first decade of Soviet labour history witnessed the gradual incorporation of the radicalised Russian workers into the Party-state structure. The Bolsheviks exercised little semblance of control over the working class until the end of the war communism period.<sup>170</sup>

Both the introduction and the phasing out of war communism were marked by particularly active periods of this militancy.

Throughout the authorities treated them as arising from supply shortages and the lack of consciousness. In response to the disturbances in early summer 1918 mentioned above the metal TU wrote:

The VSRM oblast committee holds that the partial elemental disturbances by certain groups of metal workers that took place in a period of particularly severe supply crisis was a manifestation of the insufficient consciousness of these groups. They were evoked by the criminal demagoguery of people who are setting the masses on the path of the liquidation of their power, the power of workers, and the restoration of the former social and economic relations...<sup>171</sup>

Here the themes of the protest movement and the official response are stated: the danger of restoration of capitalism, the alleged role of counter-revolutionaries, and the need for greater consciousness to combat them. A lack of identification with the Bolshevik party was treated as the absence of consciousness altogether. In practice, the party consciousness as it had

170. Charles E. Ziegler, 'Worker Participation and Worker Discontent in the Soviet Union', Political Science Quarterly, Summer 1983, p.247.

171. TsGAOR, 7952/3/212/199.

developed in 1917 was reversed and a general consciousness of workers' needs was restored.<sup>172</sup>

It is impossible to say what proportion of workers were involved in the various disturbances, though following the lull after the defeat of the workers' conference movement of 1918 each wave of unrest was more powerful than the last, culminating in the mass movement from late 1920 (Chapter 10). The protest movement attests to the erosion of the political basis of the government as the contradiction between the economic principles of war communism and the realities of worker life was closed by methods of compulsion.

Both in 1917 and during the civil war the pattern of worker protest differed from that in Petrograd. This was a reflection not only of the differing social composition of the city, or of its cultural and political traditions, but also a facet of the geography of the city. In Moscow there was no Vyborg side with massive plants isolated from the rest of the city, and the closest Moscow came to having a Putilov was the Guzhon plant, less than a tenth of its size. Here no raion can be singled out for its special militancy, and the Moscow river was not such a barrier as to allow any separate traditions to develop in Zamoskvorech'e. Instead, the concentric and radial pattern of the city focused all of life on the administrative centre, and on the Kremlin itself.

There are few details about the sporadic disturbances. At

172. The development of party consciousness in 1917 is described by Diane Koenker, 'The Evolution of Party Consciousness in 1917: The Case of the Moscow Worker', Soviet Studies, XXX, 1, January 1978, pp.36-62.

the Moscow soviet plenum of 13 January 1919 several references were made to recent disorders among Moscow workers, and Vladimirskii barely restrained the communist deputies from taking on summary powers to deal with them.<sup>173</sup> In February 1919 a report noted the increased activity of the LSRs (supporters of Spiridonova) in the Guzhon plant, especially in the plant club.<sup>174</sup> On 15 July 1919 Kamenev admitted that the mood of the workers had become significantly more hostile in the past few months. Several concessions were announced to the soviet, including the above-mentioned relaxation of supply policies permitting the bagmen to bring in grain (though this was not to be announced in the press) and a relaxation of travel restrictions from the city.<sup>175</sup>

A Moscow committee of defence (KOM) was formed at the end of June to deal with the rising tide of disturbances provoked, at least partially, by the desperate supply shortages. The MK, Moscow soviet and the Cheka were represented on the body, and in every raion a troika (sometimes called political bureau) was formed. Party members were now given the right to arrest people involved in 'counter-revolutionary' agitation.<sup>176</sup> Workers in some enterprises in Sokol'nicheskii and Lefortovo raions ran up the white flag as a sign of protest.<sup>177</sup> KOM concentrated emergency powers in its hands, overriding the Moscow soviet, and

173. Stenotchety MS, 1, pp.14-5.      174. VIMS, 6 February 1919.

175. Stenotchety MS, 18, 1919, pp.265-7.

176. N.G. Dumova, Sekretar' MK (povest' o V.M. Zagorskom), M. 1966, p.109.

177. ibid., p.110.



demanded obedience from the population of the city.<sup>178</sup> With the easing of the supply difficulties as the first of the new harvest was brought in and the use of repression the disturbances died down and KOM was temporarily disbanded (it was revived in September 1919, Chapter 6).

The non-party conferences from the end of 1919 were the scene of bitter attacks on the Bolsheviks (Chapter 7). At the end of March 1920 there were strikes in some factories, and in the Sokol'nicheskii tram park. The immediate demands of the workers apparantly centred on food shortages.<sup>179</sup> A non-party conference of female workers in Khamovnicheskii raion at the end of March 1920, attended by 550 delegates representing 5280 female workers, was the scene of bitter protest.<sup>180</sup>

At the height of the Polish war the protests and strikes, usually provoked by economic issues but not restricted to them, became particularly frequent, especially in Rogozhsko-Simonovskii and Gorodskoi raions. As usual, they were attributed to Menshevik and SR agitation.<sup>181</sup> Communists were urged by the MK to be the 'eyes and ears' of the authorities in the localities and to report on malfeasants.<sup>182</sup> The assault on non-Bolshevik trade unionism launched at this time was probably connected with

178. P, 27 September 1919.

179. KT, 28 March 1920.

180. KT, 1 April 1920.

181. KT, 4 June 1920; Iz Istorii grazhdanskoi voiny v SSSR. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, vol.3, M. 1961, pp.213-4.

Leites reports that there was a wave of strikes against militarisation in 1920: in the first six months strikes occurred in 77% of medium and large enterprises in the country. At the same time he asserts that most strikes were declared for food rather than wages, Leites, pp.195-7.

182. KT, 8 June 1920.

the wave of disturbances. Mel'nichanskii reported on them to the Moscow soviet meeting with the trade unions on 2 June 1920, but no more details are given other than that they were provoked by supply shortages. A resolution was adopted which accused certain groups of taking advantage of the difficulties. This was obviously directed against the Mensheviks, and they demonstratively left the hall led by Dan (Gurevich).<sup>183</sup> The accusation indicates that while the disturbances might have begun as supply disturbances political demands followed. By the end of 1920 the protest movement developed beyond deprecating the supply shortages and threatened the very foundations of war communism. They will be discussed in the context of the political debates of the time.

Faced with urban and economic collapse at a time of bitter civil war the 'commune state' under war communism increasingly resorted to centralism, as illustrated by the case of the Moscow trade unions, and more and more relied on coercion. While glavkist methods may have been provoked by the circumstances, the forms that the dictatorship of the proletariat took in the economy undermined the direct participation of the working class and the trade unions in managing production, weakened the economic role of the Moscow soviet, and restricted the role of the party in the economy. But in the political sphere the party became the key element in the new state.

183. KT, 3 June 1920.

P A R T     I I

The Party Process During War Communism

Introduction: the 'May programme

Following the October revolution, and especially in the first half of 1918, the party devoted its resources and attention to consolidating Soviet power and to the major political crisis associated with the peace of Brest-Litovsk. In organisational terms the party was in danger of 'withering away'. A party meeting in the Dinamo plant on 1 April 1918, for example, discovered that party life in the plant had almost ceased because all of its members were involved in some sort of social work.<sup>1</sup> At the same time the economic crisis and mass redundancies reduced the numbers of the working class. Enthusiastic workers were leaving for the Red Army leading to hitherto large party cells, such as in the Guzhon plant, being left with only a few members.<sup>2</sup>

On behalf of the Khamovnicheskii party raion committee (RK) Savel'ev described the elements of the decline in the party in early July 1918: active members had left for the fronts or the soviets; enterprises had closed so workers had left for the countryside; and above all, the rank and file party member had become less active and, he claimed, waited for leadership from the centre. The fall in party work had affected the workers who had become less 'Bolshevik-minded...wavering',<sup>3</sup> a reference to

1. P, 4 April 1918.

2. P, 5 April 1918.

3. P, 7 July 1918.

the non-party workers' movement of the time. The economic crisis, the decline in the internal coherence of party organisation, and worker disaffection, stimulated the change in emphasis, noted by Neil Harding, from commune state forms to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This shift had been maturing even while the dominance of state work and the bitter discussion over the Brest peace and economic policies had relegated party organisation itself to the background. During the hectic first few months of the Bolshevik revolution an awareness gradually became apparent that the party itself required attention. A letter from the party secretariat on 20 January 1918 stated that the party had 'bled out' its best forces and that this could only be remedied by increased attention to organisational questions.<sup>4</sup> At the VII party congress in March 1918 Sverdlov took this a stage further when he argued, in the light of the near split in the Moscow party organisation (MPO) over the Brest peace, that 'the interests of the party as a whole are higher than the interests of the individual party member'.<sup>5</sup> A new approach was required, he argued, in which both internal party organisation and the party's integrity vis-à-vis mass organisations such as the soviets had to be improved.<sup>6</sup>

The turning point in the reevaluation of the role of the party in the new state came with the TsK resolution of 18 May

4. Perepiska sekretariata TsK RSDRP(b) s mestnymi partiinymi organizatsiyami (henceforth Perepiska), vol.II, M. 1957, p.171.

5. VII ekstrennyi s"ezd RKP(b), mart 1918 goda: stenograficheskii otchet, M. 1962, p.172.

6. ibid., p.171.

1918 passed at Sverdlov's prompting. It required that 'the centre of gravity of our work be shifted somewhat towards party building', and stated, inter alia, that:

All party members irrespective of the type of their work and the functions that they fulfil are obliged to participate directly in party organisations and must not deviate from party instructions issued by the corresponding party centre.

In other words, all party members including those staffing the new state structures were primarily subordinate to the party and only then to the organisation in which they worked. The resolution for the first time in a party document then went on to incorporate the main concerns of the civil war period: on the purity of membership and purging undesirables even if this were to lead to a fall in numbers; the problem of the actual working of local party organisations; and the question of party education and training. In stressing the need for quality in a cadre party and arguing against its dilution into a mass party, the resolution marks the end of the whole period from February 1917. On the threshold of the civil war some of the elements of the party in underground conditions were revived. At the same time the definition of the party as separate from state bodies and the emphasis on purity and the obligations of members towards the party were attempts to prevent the absorption of the party into the pervading bureaucratism.<sup>8</sup>

Helgesen has characterised the resolution and the two follow-up letters as constituting a 'May programme' for the

7. Perepiska, vol.III, M. 1967, p.64; P, 19 May 1918.

8. The themes of this resolution were developed in two circular letters to local party organisations of 22 and 29 May 1918, Perepiska, vol.III, pp.72-4, 81-3; P, 22, 29 May 1918.

revival of the party.<sup>9</sup> He argues that not only the Lenin-Sverdlov group proposed the revival but also the Left Communists, who were afraid of the weakening of party influence in the soviets and the infiltration of the party by petty-bourgeois careerists.<sup>10</sup> There is some truth in this view. The Left Communist Vl. Sorin, one of the leading figures in the MGK, stressed that

The party itself, which is comparatively better inured against degeneration, must strengthen control over soviet fractions and make public workers subordinate and responsible to it.<sup>11</sup>

But Helgesen's case fails to take into account the nature of the organisational revival envisaged by the May programme, and the different ideas held on the question by the left. Throughout the civil war all wings of the party were agreed that an effective party organisation was essential and that it should exert a guiding influence over mass bodies, such as the soviets. However, the various oppositions during the civil war insisted that this should not be at the expense of limiting the party member's right to criticise party policy or that the rights of the mass bodies should be infringed.

In this respect the Left Communists censured the one-sidedness of the TsK's attempts in May 1918 to improve the work of the party organisations. The TsK was concerned with the

9. M.M. Helgesen, The Origins of the Party-State Monolith in Soviet Russia: Relations-Between the Soviets and the Party Committees in the Central Provinces, October 1917 - March 1921, PhD dissertation, State University of New York, Stony Brook, 1980, p.196.

10. ibid., p.194.

11. Kommunist, 4, June 1918, p.7.

formal, organisational, resurrection of the party, and was not interested in making it, as the left put it, a forum for all proletarian democracy:

The TsK has lately issued several circulars sounding the alarm over the condition of our party. There is no doubt that the situation is a very unhappy one with many alarming phenomena. But we consider that the most dangerous thing for the party and its intellectual (dukhovnoi) growth is the circumstance that the leading figures (verkhi) of the party have stopped drumming into its organisation autonomous thought but try simply, without further discussion, to subordinate them to the leadership of the TsK, and that these leading figures<sup>12</sup> present themselves as the carriers of party thought.

The whole concept of the party member was changing and this was to be confirmed during the civil war. The party member was to be an activist first and a discussant of theoretical problems second. This psychological division within each party member was given organisational expression within the party by the development of an inner corps of party leaders. Resistance to this process took the form of the many oppositions of the war period. The organisational consolidation of the party at the X party congress in March 1921 and the ban on factions in the party was a logical continuation of the 'May programme'.

On the eve of the civil war the TsK outlined the general programme for the new period:

If we can consider that the first period of the achievement of political power over the bourgeoisie as a whole completed, then the second period, the building of society<sup>13</sup> on new communist principles, has only just begun.

The centrepiece of the new period of communist construction was to be the party in the political sphere and the elimination of

12. Kommunist, 4, p.15.

13. 22 May 1918 TsK circular, Perepiska, vol.III, p.72.

commodity production in the economy. The Russian revolution was isolated, the circular went on, and the departure of active communists to soviet work and the influx of new communists had weakened party organisation leading to the emergence of the 'Left' Communist tendency. In language and analysis remarkably similar to that of the X party congress resolutions the TSK added:

Without a firmly united party, acting as one person, we will not be able to cope with the tasks facing us. The working masses will not be able to retain in their hands the power gained during the October days if there is not a powerful core, permeated with a single will and a single aspiration.<sup>14</sup>

The May programme was a recognition of the limited bases of national order in Russia<sup>15</sup> and hence the success of the socialist revolution was identified with the domination of the Bolshevik party. More than a defensive reaction to the developing civil war, a programme was outlined for the new period which defined both the type of party required and its central role in the new society.

14. ibid., p.73.

15. Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions, CUP 1979, p.206.



## CHAPTER 4

### Membership

Recruitment policy and the nature of the changes in the social composition and occupational structure of party membership were a central concern and cause of controversy throughout the civil war. With the growth of the state bureaucracy attempts were made to ensure a flow of party members to occupy the key positions and hence their training and political education became an important issue. The vetting of party recruits and the expulsion of undesirables had wider implications for the party's self-definition.

#### 1. The pattern of recruitment

The numbers in the Moscow party organisation are difficult to establish with any accuracy until the reregistration of August 1920. The figures before then are often contradictory and usually inflated. The problem is compounded by the movement of party members to the fronts, on various assignments, and by the many communists who came to Moscow for training or on missions. The pattern however can be established (Table 7). From the high point of 17,306 members in October 1917 numbers had halved to under 8000 in mid-1918. After the revolution organisations were drained of their most active members and as functioning party groupings they atrophied. The party cells in factories donated the bulk of their membership to the state apparatus and many were disbanded totally. Sverdlov's estimate, backed by Avanesov, of 20,000 members in the city in March 1918 was clearly an

Table 7

Size of Moscow party organisation

	City			Guberniya		Joint organisation		
	Members	Cands	Total	Total		Members	Cands	Total
1917								
Feb <sup>a</sup>	600	-	600	200				
Apr <sup>b</sup>	6,000	-	6,000	8,554				
Jul <sup>c</sup>	15,000	-	15,000	-				
Oct <sup>d</sup>	17,306	-	17,306	-				
Dec <sup>e</sup>	-	-	-	10,000				
1918								
Mar <sup>e</sup>	20,000	-	20,000	15,000				
Jun <sup>f</sup>	7,300	-	7,300	-				
Nov <sup>g</sup>	14,694	-	14,694	2,881 <sup>h</sup>				
1919								
Mar <sup>i</sup>	17,000	-	17,000	5,000				
Aug <sup>j</sup>	15,834	4,818	20,652	-				
Oct <sup>j</sup>	32,600	4,818	37,418	-				
1920								
Mar <sup>k</sup>	34,015	3,767	37,782	6,488				
May <sup>k</sup>	35,044	4,463	39,507	6,819	41,683	-	-	
Jun <sup>m</sup>	-	-	-	-	39,854	8,936	48,790 <sup>l</sup>	
Jul <sup>m</sup>	38,061	-	-	5,528	42,697	9,557	52,264 <sup>l</sup>	
Sep <sup>m</sup>	23,069	2,900	25,969	4,572	-	-	27,641	
1921								
Jan <sup>k</sup>	-	-	-	-	36,720	9,280	46,000 <sup>n</sup>	
Jun <sup>k</sup>	32,475	7,886	40,361	7,809	40,284	10,552	50,836	
Sep <sup>o</sup>	26,565	4,240	30,805	7,926	34,491	6,726	40,767	

Sources: (a) Ocherki ist. MO KPSS, p.214. (b) VII (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP(b): protokoly, M. 1958, pp.152, 154. (c) VI s"ezd RSDRP(b), avgust 1917 goda: protokoly, M. 1958, p.204. (d) Perepiska, vol.VII, M. 1972, p.438 nl. (e) VII s"ezd RKP, pp.4, 115, 116. (f) D.A. Chugaev (ed), Rabochii klass sovetskoi rossii v pervyi god diktatury proletariata, M. 1964, p.76. (g) Perepiska, vol.III, p.197. (h) P, 25 January 1919. (i) VIII s"ezd RKP(b), mart 1918g.: protokoly, M. 1959, p.471. (j) Moskovskaya organizatsiya RKP(b) v tsifrakh, issue 1, M. 1925, p.3. (k) Moskovskaya gorodskaya i Moskovskaya oblastnaya organizatsii KPSS v tsifrakh, M. 1972, pp.27-8. (l) Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., M. 1920, p.7. (m) Otchet MK-za sentyabr' 1920g., M. 1920, p.6. (n) V Moskovskaya gubernskaya partiinaya konferentsiya (RKP), 19-21 fevralya 1921g. kratkii ocherk i rezolyutsii, M. 1921, p.3. (o) Otchet o deyatel'nosti MK-ta RKP(b) za iyul' avgust, i sentyabr' 1921g., M. 1921, p.22.

exaggeration.<sup>16</sup>

By the end of 1918 membership had risen to nearly 15,000, and remained at this level up to the mass recruitment of the party week in October 1919. At the VIII party congress Sosnovskii drew on the low membership figures for the MPO to challenge Zinoviev's exaggerated claims on the growth of party membership after October 1917.<sup>17</sup> During the party week the membership of the MPO doubled to 32,600, while the number of candidates remained unchanged at 4818. The figures available for the following period vary considerably, ostensibly reaching a peak of over 40,000 members and over 9000 candidates in July 1920 for the joint city and guberniya organisation, which had been united since May 1920. This rapid increase was reversed by the August 1920 reregistration which saw a massive drop in party membership in the city, leaving only 23,063 members and 2900 candidates in October 1920. Up to March 1921 there was a slow rise as soldiers returned from the fronts and recruitment continued.

The pattern of recruitment is therefore marked by a rapid rise to October 1917, a slow fall to March 1918, then a precipitous decline to mid-1918, thereafter rising as mobilisations were compensated by more effective recruiting. At the same time the worker communists were the first to be mobilised and the new intake was predominantly from the offices. To counteract this worker recruitment from the factories was encouraged from late 1918, but still the proportion of employees rose. The party week in October 1919 led to a massive rise in numbers and partially

16. VI s"ezd RKP, pp.4, 115.

17. VIII s"ezd RKP, p.173.

restored the balance of workers in factories. The growth continued as the civil war ended, punctuated only by the reregistration of August 1920, as communists returned from the front and the attractions of party membership were no longer balanced by fear of mobilisation. This growth was only halted by the party purge of 1921.

The pattern of recruitment reveals the importance of the party week in maintaining the level of membership:

Table 8

Length of party membership (stazh) of MPO on 1 September 1920

	City	Gub	Total No.	%	% for 36 gubs exc. M.+ P.	% for 38 gubs inc.
pre-1905	497	30	527	2	-	1
1905-1907	415	48	463	1	1	1
1908-1916	684	39	723	2	1	1
1917 Jan-Oct	3,117	527	3,644	10	7	7
1917 Nov-Dec, 1918	5,807	1,187	6,994	20	21	20
1919 Jan-Aug	3,729	603	4,332	12	12	12
1919 Sep-Dec	8,084	1,326	9,410	27	31	29
1920	6,999	1,580	8,579	24	26	27
Not known	488	66	554	2	1	1
TOTAL	29,820	5,406	35,226	100	100	100

Source: Materialy po statistike lichnogo sostava RKP(b),  
M. 1921, pp.62-3.

Members with a pre-1917 stazh in Moscow city in August 1920 exceeded the total membership of only 600 in February 1917, indicating the concentration of old revolutionaries in the city. To a lesser degree the same is true for the January - October 1917 group, with the MPO containing 3% more than the rest of the party without the two capitals. But from 1917 the stazh groups consistently return a total less than the membership total of the respective periods. From this the retention rate of members can

be calculated, though because of the contradictory membership figures this can only be taken as an approximate indicator. Between 1917 and 1920 the retention rate averaged 26% per annum, compared to 30.9% nationally.<sup>18</sup>

During the civil war the MPO had not simply doubled in size but had to a large degree renewed itself. Only 4713 (27.2%) of the city membership of 17,306 in October 1917 remained in August 1920. Only 15.8% had joined before October 1917, and only 5.3% had been members under the autocracy. Therefore a substantial majority of the MPO was a product of the revolution itself: 84.2% of the city party as it stood in late 1920 had joined after October 1917.<sup>19</sup>

The massive recruitment of the civil war overshadowed the original membership of 1917. The recruitment had major repercussions not only on the composition of the party but also on its political practice. The party was no longer a group of determined revolutionaries working for a future revolution but was forced to adapt itself to the problem of managing a vast country in unfavourable circumstances. The group of about 5000 in Moscow who had been party members before the October revolution became the kernel of the party in power and took the key posts. A parallel can be drawn between this group and the absorption of the radicalised workers into the new state apparatus. On the one hand there was a group of communists who

18. The national figure from Jonathan R. Adelman, 'The Development of the Soviet Party Apparatus in the Civil War: Center, Localities and Nationality Areas', Russian History/Histoire Russe, 9, pt 1, 1982, p.93.

19. By late 1921 only 13% of MPO members had joined before October 1917, and only 4% before February 1917, KT, 21 September 1921.

had undergone the trials of the Tsarist period and the Provisional Government, joined by a few of the most able recruits after October. On the other, a shifting group of members, a large proportion of whom were soon expelled or left the party for one reason or another, often passive in relation to party duties and marked by a high degree of political illiteracy. Given the departure of the most active workers from the plants, and the changes in the social composition of those remaining, it could be argued that there simply was not a large enough reserve of committed and able workers in the factories to replenish the wastage of party members at the fronts and elsewhere. This was the basis of the split in the party between the 'old guard' and the mass of membership, the verkhi (higher-ups) and the nizy (rank and file).

## 2. The first reregistrations: 1918

During the civil war checks on party membership took the form of reregistrations, later called chistki (cleansings or purges). There were three main reregistration periods: spring 1918 - March 1919; the first all-Russian reregistration ordered by the VIII party congress because of increasing concern about 'unhealthy' elements joining the party, taking place from May to September 1919; and the third decided by the IX party congress in March 1920 carried out between July-December 1920. The MPO underwent a major purge campaign in every year of the civil war, and for over half of the period was in the grip of such a campaign.

The first series of reregistrations took place haphazardly and on the initiative of the local organisations. They began in

Moscow in spring 1918 and were intensified following concern expressed at the VII party congress over 'careerists' joining the party. During a reregistration all members effectively had to rejoin their organisation and thus once again their credentials for membership were adjudicated. Contrary to the common view<sup>20</sup> the first reregistrations, in Moscow at least, began on the morrow of the revolution, indicating that one of the first tasks of the revolutionary party in power is to check its own membership.

There are not many details on the first reregistrations but the following examples illustrate the general pattern. In February-March 1918 a reregistration took place in Basmannyi raion. Here membership had risen from about 1800 in October 1917<sup>21</sup> to about 2000 in January 1918. According to the RK secretary's report for the raion, the Brest peace had revealed that the organisation was 'not at the required level' and so a reregistration had been declared, leaving only 400 members.<sup>22</sup> These figures illustrate both the small amount of 'October communists', those joining the victorious party, and the massive scale of expulsions of 'unsuitable' people. In this raion the number of cells fell from 48 to 15 between January and June 1918.<sup>23</sup> The figures could indicate that the earlier membership figures were grossly inflated, or they can be taken as a measure

20. Marcel Liebman, Leninism under Lenin (trans Brian Pearce), Merlin Press, London 1980, p.308, states that the first reregistrations were held in 1919.

21. Y.I. Baganov, Moskovskie bol'sheviki v ogne revolyutsionnykh boev, M. 1976, p.143.

22. Chugaev, p.96.

23. Chugaev, pp.96, 99.

of the tremendous 'withering away of the party' in the first half of 1918.

The 18 May 1918 TsK meeting and the two letters insisted on the application of the VI party congress (August 1917) decision incorporated in the party statute that recruits had to be recommended by two party members and endorsed (or expelled) by a general meeting of party members in the given organisation.<sup>24</sup> The 29 May 1918 letter argued that many 'alien elements' had entered the party who baulked at 'proletarian discipline'.<sup>25</sup> Following the 18 May resolution the TsK urged the MK to put its own house in order, and Sverdlov was successful in ensuring that the 28 May 1918 city party conference was dominated by organisational questions. At the conference he severely criticised infringements of party discipline by communists. The resolution noted that the 'all-party point of view had fallen into the background behind the local, professional, group view'. Communists working in soviet and other institutions were to form fractions or cells and ensure that the TsK or MK line was fulfilled, 'purging the party of all elements of decay and degeneration'. The party, the resolution concluded, was to be built on the basis of unswerving devotion to the principles of democratic centralism.<sup>26</sup>

24. VI s"ezd RSDRP(b), avgust 1917 goda: protokoly, M. 1958, p.265.

25. P, 29 May 1918.

26. K.I. Varlamov, N.I. Slamikhin, Razoblachenie V.I. Leninym teorii i taktiki "levykh kommunistov" (noyabr' 1917 - 1918gg.), M. 1964, p.372; I.A. Popov, 'Deyatel'nost' Moskovskoi partiinoi organizatsii po ukrepleniu svoikh ryadov (okt. 1917-yan. 1919gg.)', Uch. zap. MOPI im. Krupskoi, Istoriya KPSS, vol.215, issue 13, 1968, p.73.



There are some indications that the reregistrations were used against the Left Communists. The 22 May 1918 TsK circular had suggested that the Left Communist movement was a result of the organisational weakness of the party and of the influx of new members.<sup>27</sup> The 10 June 1918 MK meeting noted that 'the raions are increasingly interested in purging the party', and I.A. Pyatnitskii made the point explicit when he said of the Left Communists: 'If they do not want to bear responsibility for the general line of the party, they can leave it. We do not need honorary party members'.<sup>28</sup> The 'May programme' was not only a response to the organisational anaemia of the party but also a specific reaction to the opposition of the left. Unfortunately, the extent to which the 1918 reregistrations were used to discipline the Left Communists is as unfathomable as is the extent to which the 1921 purge was used against the Workers' Opposition.

From the end of May 1918 attempts were made to implement the new programme. In Khamovnicheskii raion the procedure for screening applicants was strengthened by the provision that the candidate and his or her recomendees had not only to attend a general meeting but also to undergo an interview by the RK bureau beforehand. Failure to attend either meeting by any of those concerned meant that the application automatically lapsed.<sup>29</sup> In Sokol'nicheskii raion membership since the end of 1917 had fallen from 1500<sup>30</sup> to under a thousand in May 1918, and following a

27. Perepiska, vol.III, p.73.

28. Varlamov, p.373.

29. P, 28 May 1918.

reregistration in early summer<sup>31</sup> the RK insisted that all party members had to undertake some party work, to pay dues regularly, and to attend meetings. Against the background of the civil war the RK called for the general arming of party members.<sup>32</sup> The attempt to inculcate party discipline coincided with the need to instil military discipline. All party members were to be 'tied' (prikreplenie) to a cell, and the party members employed in offices (for brevity they will be called state party workers - SPW) were to participate in party life.<sup>33</sup>

In summer 1918 reregistrations continued in the MPO.<sup>34</sup> A general reregistration was declared for all of Moscow in September 1918. In Basmannyi raion membership had increased to 816 since the first reregistration in early 1918, and in this second purge it fell to 550. A third reregistration in early 1919 decreased the numbers from 1180 to 600.<sup>35</sup> In the three reregistrations in the raion about 2250 people had left or been expelled, more than the membership itself. What happened to these people is not known, but it can be assumed that some of

30. V.V. Anikeev, 'Svedeniya o bol'shevistskikh organizatsiyakh s marta po dekabr' 1917 goda', VI KPSS, 2, 1958, p.147.

31. Between May and July 1918 membership fell from 1015 to 3-350, P, 25 May, 18 July 1918.

32. P, 5 June 1918. A motion to this effect was also passed by a general meeting of communists in Presnenskii raion on 1 June 1918, P, 6 June 1918.

33. Resolutions to this effect were passed by party general meetings in Zamoskvorech'e and Sokol'nicheskii raions in mid-July, P, 18 July 1918.

34. E.g., in the reregistration in Rogozhsko-Simonovskii raion in June 1918 (P, 9 June 1918) membership fell from 800 to 489 by the end of July, Chugaev, p.76, P, 23 July 1918.

35. Chugaev, p.96.

them formed a potential focus of dissatisfaction against the party. The scale of the reregistrations indicates that the attempt to achieve a stricter enforcement of recruitment procedure after the May 1918 TsK initiative was not very effective in screening the party from 'undesirable elements'.

While the above measures were taken to implement the 'May programme' in Moscow, the period up to the VIII party congress in March 1919 was marked by mounting alarm over the condition of the organisation. On the eve of a reregistration in Butyrskii raion, for example, in summer 1918 (when membership stood at about 600) concern was expressed over the extreme passivity of the majority of them. A meeting of active party workers (APWs) at the end of July 1918 noted that all the most conscious members were occupied in soviet work and devoted no time to party affairs.<sup>36</sup> A major article in Pravda in August 1918 argued that since the revolution there had been both a quantitative and qualitative decline in party membership, alien elements had infiltrated, and that the party was permeated by corruption.<sup>37</sup> These general alarms about the condition of the party became a common feature of the party press and meetings at this time, usually focusing on the passivity of party members, the lack of party discipline, and the intake of 'alien' elements.<sup>38</sup> A. Lisitsyn, a member of the Butyrskii RK,

36. This was one of the first raions to insist on a 'candidate' stage of 3-4 months for catechumens. This was dropped when the sympathisers' groups were organised (P, 1 August 1918). Further restrictions on membership were introduced by a party general meeting on 3 August which stipulated that recomendees were each to have been in the party for over six months, P, 15 August 1918.

37. N. Kopylev in P, 25 August 1918.

38. Examples of such articles can be found in P, 21 September, 1 October 1918.

in October 1918 inveighed against passive party members and insisted that all were to be active in one way or another.<sup>39</sup> Towards the end of October 1918 Bergman described the case of the recruit in Moscow who insisted on party membership 'tonight, in order to get the job tomorrow'. Recommendations were being given by friends (po znakomstvu) to help one another.<sup>40</sup> The party was not 'widening' he argued: it was degenerating.

The rapidly changing physiognomy of party membership was noted in Zamoskvorech'e at the end of November 1918. At the time there were 1650 party members organised in 45 cells. Even though the raion had just completed the third mobilisation of party members to the fronts numbers were still increasing. But, as one correspondent noted, the atmosphere at general meetings (as in the factories) had changed radically. Few of the old comrades were to be found and the atmosphere at meetings was 'philistine' (obyvatel'skii). There was no particular revolutionary mood.<sup>41</sup> An article in Pravda a few weeks later argued that it was clear to all communists that the party was 'sick' with petty-bourgeois philistinism. The party was filling up with peasants and careerists, the article argued, and the main symptoms of the sickness were endless personal squabbles and quitting the party on the eve of mobilisations.<sup>42</sup>

It would appear that the concern was justified, and there was a steady stream of expulsions from the party alongside the

39. P, 8 October 1918.

40. P, 19 October 1918. This was the incident recounted by Zinov'ev at the VIII party congress, VIII s"ezd RKP, p.294.

41. P, 30 November 1918.

42. P, 17 December 1918.

reregistrations. For example, Butyrskii RPO expelled six members in August 1918: 3 for 'behaviour not becoming for communists', 2 for refusing to go to the front, and 1 for not attending raion meetings.<sup>43</sup> While these figures are low, the raion party membership following a reregistration in autumn 1918, taken together with tighter entry procedures and mobilisations, fell from 600 in August<sup>44</sup> to 380 in January 1919.<sup>45</sup> Earlier a major 'squabble' had erupted in Sushchevsko-Mar'inskii raion where it was allegedly discovered that some responsible party leaders 'only pretended to be Bolsheviks'. An investigation commission barred them from holding responsible posts and the case was transferred to the MK court of honour (sud chesti) for final judgement.<sup>46</sup>

On 11 January 1919 the MK called on all raions which had not conducted a reregistration to do so immediately. The MK bureau was called on to draw up a list of demands to be made of all party members during the check.<sup>47</sup> Gradually the limited aims of the first reregistrations, to clear the party of 'careerist and unworthy elements', gave way to the specific policy of improving the social composition of the party by increasing the intake of workers and minimising the recruitment of non-workers. Deindustrialisation, the growth of the bureaucratic apparatus, and the pervasive influence of the illegal economy with its

43. P, 15 August 1918.

44. P, 1 August 1918.

45. P, 5 January 1919.

46. P, 17 August 1918. On 16 August Lomskii, Rutman and Kozlov were elected to preside over the court (P, 20 August 1918). The punishments were confirmed by the court (P, 30 August 1918).

47. P, 18 January 1919.

attendant pernicious effect on social relations provided the milieu for the debates over the corruption threatening to engulf the party at this time. The response was to emphasise the role of the old guard and at the same time to encourage the development of the party as an exclusive organisation and to intensify controls over the communist.

### 3. Sympathisers' groups and candidature

From mid-1918 the fluidity of the membership of the MPO increased dramatically. Every day trains left Moscow bearing communists to the fronts, on grain requisitioning detachments, and to act as organisers of soviet power throughout the country. The answer to the shortage of personnel was found in the organisation of sympathisers' groups. Later some of their functions were transferred to the system of candidature, with the difference that while the sympathisers' groups were part of a continuing recruitment campaign, candidature was a way of screening new members and reflected increased concern about the quality of recruitment.

The earliest groups were established in spring 1918.<sup>48</sup> The IV Moscow oblast party conference on 15 May 1918 called on all party organisations to form groups of sympathisers around the cells.<sup>49</sup> The MK first discussed the question on 9 August 1918 when Zagorskii called for their formation as schools of communist education. Decision was postponed until 16 August, when Lenin spoke in favour of 'widening the sphere of our influence' by 'showing greater faith in the worker masses and drawing on them

48. P, 22 February 1918.

49. Chugaev, p.370, n33.

for forces'. Lenin called for the attraction of sympathisers to the party from youth and the trade unions to replace those departing for the fronts.<sup>50</sup> In Lenin's conception they were intended to give workers a political education by drawing them into political and social work. They were to act as a testing ground and as a reservoir for entrance into the party. The former functions were later fulfilled by the trade unions, women's and youth organisations, acting as Stalin's famous 'transmission belts' between the party and the masses.<sup>51</sup> Their more direct functions as a training ground before membership into the party were taken over by the more specialised candidate stage directly controlled by the party.

The MK meeting of 16 August decided that a special statute was to be drawn up by the MK bureau to regulate them.<sup>52</sup> After discussion in the raions this statute was ratified at the 31 August city party conference on the motion of one of the MK secretaries, D.I. Efremov. The statute stated that 'anyone who supports the RKP(b) in its struggle for the liberation of the proletariat and the whole labouring people from political and economic exploitation' could be a member of the groups.<sup>53</sup> recruitment was to take place on the recommendation of one party member or one sympathiser subject to the ratification of the local party cell. The statute gave sympathisers fairly wide powers up to voting rights in the

50. Lenin PSS, vol.37, pp.46-7.

51. T.H. Rigby, Communist Party Membership in the USSR 1917-1967, Princeton 1968, p.72.

52. P, 22 August 1918.

53. P, 3 September 1918.

cell or local committee during the discussion of local or general political questions. They were banned from closed party meetings and existed as groups around the kernel of a party cell.

The MK call to form these groups met with considerable opposition. In view of the intense concern about the quality of party membership, noted above, the raions were reluctant simultaneously to conduct both a purge and a recruitment campaign. The general meeting of Gorodskoi raion on 22 August 1918, for example, by a majority of 72-22 with 10 absentions voted against them. At that meeting Fidler argued that quality and not quantity was the priority.<sup>54</sup>

Results varied from raion to raion, the most successful being Rogozhsko-Simonovskii with half of the total of 1000 sympathisers in Moscow by the end of September 1918.<sup>55</sup> Success naturally depended on the initial strength of the party cells in any raion since they were founded not on the initiative of the sympathisers themselves but of the local party organisations. They did act as a stimulant to the creation of new party cells, and in some factories there were more sympathisers than party members. By mid-1919 there were about 5000 officially registered sympathisers, and they helped maintain the balance of numbers in the MPO with the departure of communists to the fronts.

Sympathisers were subject to the reregistrations as any full

54. P, 31 August 1918. The 22 August general meeting in Khamovnichskii raion also passed a resolution against the formation of the groups, arguing that it would open the party to 'undersirable elements' (P, 4 September 1918). Basmannyi raion agreed to their formation only with great reluctance, P, 13 September 1918.

55. Ocherki ist. MO KPSS, p.363.



party member and no latitude was allowed in their views or behaviour. They were subject to party mobilisations. In November 1918, for example, 600 sympathisers were sent from Moscow to the front with the communist levy, and over 1500 participated in the supply detachments.<sup>56</sup> Other party organisations modelled their sympathisers' groups on Moscow's, and used the Moscow statute as the basis of their own.<sup>57</sup> They acted as communist auxiliaries under party control, and were not allowed to develop any organisational autonomy.

As a form of recruitment they were increasingly seen as a back entrance into the party,<sup>58</sup> justifying the earlier suspicions. Following the VIII party congress sympathisers' groups were abolished in several large party organisations, including Petrograd. In Moscow criticism centred on their role in allowing employees from soviet institutions, who were predominantly recruited from the petty-bourgeoisie, to inveigle their way into the party. When in mid-1919, for example, the situation at the front became perilous with Denikin's advance the cell under the Rogozhsko-Simonovskii raion soviet, two-thirds of whose members were sympathisers, dissolved, and the 'soviet baryshni' (ladies, usually employed in secretarial duties), it was reported, pleaded to be expelled on the grounds of illness in order to avoid mobilisation.<sup>59</sup>

56. Chugaev, p.370, n.33.

57. Perepiska, vol.IV, p.39.

58. Butyrskii RK, for example, in early 1919 criticised the poor quality of the sympathisers. In late 1918 it had halted recruitment to the groups, with a membership of 800, to check on the party affiliations of those joining. The RK argued that many would have to be expelled since no more than 2-300 attended meetings, and that many 'unhealthy elements' had entered the groups as a way of joining the party, P, 5 January 1919.

By mid-1919 restrictions were introduced to the formation of sympathisers' groups in soviet institutions.<sup>60</sup> Following the XV guberniya party conference (27-29 July 1919), where calls were made for their abolition on the grounds that the groups were allowing bourgeois elements to join the party,<sup>61</sup> they were abolished in the guberniya on 28 August 1919 with some of the more suitable members joining the party.<sup>62</sup> The groups were dropped from the party statute adopted in December 1919. Zinoviev argued that the party now had more powerful means at its disposal to attract new members, above all the non-party conferences and the party weeks.<sup>63</sup> When in early 1922 the idea was raised to form support (sodeistviya) groups for the party the restrictive organisational structure of the sympathisers' groups, with a statute and the insistence that members carry out various party duties, was explicitly avoided, and a much looser form adopted.<sup>64</sup>

The system of candidature took over from the sympathisers' groups as the testing period for aspirants to party membership. In late 1918 certain Moscow raions, as in Butyrskii, had adopted the practice of placing recruits on a probationary period of 2-3 months. The system was instituted in the guberniya at the time and gradually became formalised for the city as a whole. An applicant could be accepted as a candidate on the recommendation of two party members whose own membership was each not less than

59. P, 23 July 1919.

60. P, 11 July 1919.

61. P, 30 July 1919.

62. P, 7 September 1919.

63. VIII konf. RKP, p.140.

64. Izvestiya MK RKP(b), 1, 20 March 1920, p.54.

six months. The candidate then had to be accepted by a general meeting of the organisation. They had the right to attend open party meetings, but without voting rights. Taking into account the need to mould the social composition of the party differential lengths were adopted for the period of candidature: for workers not less than a month; peasants three months; and others not less than six months. Acceptance even then was not automatic, but only if the candidates had proved 'that they were devoted to the party'.<sup>65</sup> The practice was generalised for the rest of the party on the basis of Moscow's example by the party statute of December 1919.<sup>66</sup> Candidature in principle was a more effective vetting procedure than the sympathisers' groups, but from the evidence of continuing concern over the quality of recruitment to the party it was not a particularly effective screen.

#### 4. Social pattern of recruitment and the 1919 reregistration

The decline of external constraints over recruitment with the rise of the Bolshevik party to supreme power resulted in internal decay becoming the greatest danger as 'the old supporters are joined by hordes of opportunists eager to get to the trough', as Brzezinskii vividly puts it.<sup>67</sup> The response as we have seen was to conduct internal campaigns in the form of reregistrations to expel the undesirables.

This did not prevent a major crisis over recruitment

65. P, 7 September 1919.

66. VIII konf. RKP, p.227.

67. Z.K. Brzezinskii, The Permanent Purge, Harvard UP, 1956, p.18.

developing in the period preceding and at the VIII party congress. For the first time since the revolution general concern was expressed over the social composition of the party. In the party as a whole 65% of recruitment in 1917 had been designated workers. By 1920 this had fallen to 35%, with the greatest decline in 1918 and early 1919.<sup>68</sup> In Moscow tendencies in the social composition of the party changed in the same direction as in the rest of the country but not with such great force. Only in 1917 in Moscow was the intake of workers over half of the total, and the percentage declined thereafter (Table 9) as the social composition of the city changed in favour of employees.

The high intake of office staff - the rising bureaucratic corps of secretaries, functionaries, clerks, and so on - was a pronounced feature of recruitment in Moscow with its vast bureaucratic apparatuses serving the whole country.<sup>69</sup> From a peak in 1918 the recruitment of employees remained remarkably stable at 20% in 1919-20 despite all the attempts to give preference to workers. In Moscow the recruitment of workers was a lower proportion than in Petrograd, but higher than in the party as a whole. But the fact that workers were in a minority was the basis for the major crisis over recruitment policy and party

68. Materialy po statistike lichnogo sostava RKP(b), M. 1921, p.XI

69. The concern at the end of 1918 over 'careerist' recruitment and the continuing use of sympathisers' groups for 'back door' entrance into the party has already been noted. There is a mass of anecdotal evidence on the sale of recommendations and other abuses of entrance regulations at this time. Paul Dukes, Red Dusk and the Morrow, London 1923, p.267, describes the chaotic state of entrance procedures in 1919.

Table 9

Social pattern of recruitment (in %) Moscow & Petrograd, 1917-20

	Workers	Peasants	Craft- workers	Intell- igentsia	Office staff	Other	Not known	TOTAL
Moscow								
pre-1917	43	2	2	22	18	8	5	100
1917	55	3	2	8	18	8	6	100
1918	47	5	3	8	23	8	6	100
1919	47	9	4	5	20	7	8	100
1920	44	11	4	5	20	7	9	100
Petrograd								
pre-1917	68	1	1	11	14	5	-	100
1917	71	3	2	4	15	5	-	100
1918	60	7	3	5	21	4	-	100
1919	59	9	3	3	19	6	1	100
1920	55	11	5	3	20	6	-	100

Source: Materialy po statistike lichnogo sostava RKP(b), M. 1921, p.XII. The table shows the social composition of each intake group as it stood after the August 1920 reregistration. It therefore only shows the situation after the reregistrations, mobilisations, and so on, had altered the picture, but it does serve as a general guide to the changes in the social composition of recruitment. According to official statistics the class composition of the party as a whole changed as follows (%) (Rigby, p.85):

	Workers	Peasants	Office staff etc.
1917	60.2	7.5	32.2
1918	56.9	14.5	28.6
1919	47.8	21.8	30.4
1920	43.8	25.1	31.1
1921	41.0	28.2	30.8

organisation in early 1919.<sup>70</sup>

70. One aspect of the crisis was the attempt to prevent the consolidation of what Rigby calls the tendency for 'local communists to merge with soviet officialdom in a new privileged stratum' with advantages over non-party members in rations, housing and job procurement (Rigby, p.75). At the same time the rather nebulous principle of the 'party maximum' (partmax), established by SNK soon after October 1917 and stipulating that persons in positions of political leadership should not gain any material advantages and their pay should not exceed a skilled

The months preceding the VIII party congress were marked by calls from the Democratic Centralists and others in the raions of Moscow to eliminate bureaucracy and to overcome the split in the party between the active party workers (APWs) and the rank and file party member (RFPM), a breach perceived as one between the verkhi and the nizy. While the rank and file membership had been successively purged and mobilised to the army, the cells weakened and in many cases dissolved in the factories, the only stable core to the local party organisations increasingly became the party committees themselves. In Moscow this meant the RKs and MK itself, though even they, as will be seen in Chapter 5, were much weakened by the mobilisations. The Rogozhsko-Simonovskii RK report for December 1918 - January 1919 illustrated the predominance of the non-worker element in the organisation. At general meetings of its 600 members the few communists from the factories were overshadowed by the great number of commissars and soviet employees. The animosity between the two groups was indicated by the fact that they split into two hostile camps over divisive issues.<sup>71</sup>

An important TsK circular of 4 February 1919 outlined the response to the threatened renewed 'emptying' of the party by the mobilisations. Recruitment was to be stepped up since only the

workman's wages, lost its credibility with the devaluation of money and the increased importance of access to various services, such as reserved foodshops, and to the jobs themselves. The party leaders in the Kremlin received special rations. Lower level leaders in the Lux, National' and Metropol' Hotels were served with above average food and rations.

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71. P, 2 February 1919.

top layers of the proletariat had so far been tapped, it insisted, but increased emphasis was to be placed on training in the party schools to prepare them to replace the departed activists. The circular put its faith in a strong organisation to effect educational and organisational work.<sup>72</sup>

On the eve of the VIII party congress in Moscow calls for a thorough purge of the party grew in intensity. On 3 February 1919 I.V. Mgeladze's motion calling for a party cleansed of unhealthy elements was passed by the MK. It argued that a purge would improve the work of the local organisations with a clear line set down on all important questions and the TSK secretariat ensuring that they were carried out.<sup>73</sup> When MK member G.Ya. Belen'kii informed a general party meeting in Presnenskii raion on 6 February that the MK was taking strict measures for the purging of the party he linked this with the enforcement of strict party discipline.<sup>74</sup> The implication was that a party cleared of 'hangers on' and composed only of people who participated in party life would be able to overcome the fractures in the party: between the verkhi and the nizy, and those in state occupations.

The MK returned to the question on 15 February 1919 when it passed a resolution on the organisational questions to be discussed at the VIII party congress. A large part of the resolution was concerned with the 'adventuristic' elements who had worked their way into the party to pursue their own ends.

72. Partiya v period inostrannoï voennoi interventsii i grazhdanskoi voiny (1918-1920gg.): dokumenty i materialy, M. 1962, p.75.

73. P, 6 February 1919.

74. P, 8 February 1919.

Their shameful behaviour, the resolution stated, had lowered the prestige of the party in the eyes of the masses and provided fertile ground for counter-revolutionary agitation. The MK called for a thorough purge of the party to be initiated by the congress.<sup>75</sup>

Mgeladze once again called for a purge and for strict discipline in the party at a general meeting of Rogozhsko-Simonovskii party organisation on 13 February 1919, attended by 254 party members and 56 sympathisers. His resolution acknowledged that the party was undergoing a severe crisis and that the VIII congress could begin the healing process. A counter-resolution proposed by Svobodnyi called for all issues to be raised at the congress to be first discussed at all party meetings and that the TsK should allow a full discussion to take place in the party.<sup>76</sup> He thus gave voice to the rank and file party members who increasingly felt that decisions of cardinal importance for the party were no longer being discussed by the party as a whole. A delegate meeting in Zheleznodorozhnyi (railway) raion at the end of February 1919, attended by 60 representatives from 20 cells, called for a purge of the party. It added the caveat that the verkhi and nizy should be allowed to participate in a businesslike (delovoi) way in the party and thus their self-activity would be encouraged. The resolution called for party work to be at the centre of attention.<sup>77</sup>

75. P, 19 February 1919.

76. P, 20 February 1919.

77. P, 28 February 1919. Zheleznodorozhnyi raion was one of the first to apply differential entrance requirements: workers could be accepted by a cell and confirmed by the RK secretariat (EC), whereas employees could only be accepted by the full RK P, 4 September 1918.



The hopes of the MK and the MPO that the VIII party congress would respond to the crisis by reintegrating the groups in the party were disappointed. It stressed the need to attract new cadres, and thus once again, as with the sympathisers' groups, the MPO was forced to absorb a new intake before it had digested the old. The party itself was to act as a massive transmission belt for the recruitment and training of thousands of new cadres to staff the new state apparatus: "One of the most important tasks of the party at the moment is to introduce new thousands of its best workers into the network of state administration".<sup>78</sup>

The congress discussions on the changing social composition of the party prompted the first general all-Russian re-registration of party membership, to be completed by 1 May 1919 and with special attention to those who had joined since October 1917. Entrance to the party was halted for the duration. Each party member was obliged to complete a personal questionnaire and present the recommendations of two well-known communists who had been party members themselves for not less than six months. Non-fulfilment of these conditions meant relegation to sympathiser or candidate status, or expulsion. Many simply failed to comply with these conditions and were automatically no longer considered members.<sup>79</sup> The large number in this category is partially explained by the fact that many of those who had been mobilised to the fronts had not been taken off the membership registers.

The reregistration was planned to have been completed by 1 June 1919, but in many organisations, including Moscow, it continued up to September. In the raions reregistration

78. VIII s"ezd RKP, p.423.

79. P, 12 June 1919.

commissions were established. In Rogozhsko-Simonovskii raion, for example, a five-man commission composed of A.Sokolov from the TsK, Myasnikov from the MK, and three members of the RK reviewed each member, aided by representatives of the cells in the raions. The committee members themselves were not obliged to reregister.<sup>80</sup> They worked from 11 May to 13 June in 13 sessions. In this raion membership fell from 934 to 360, a fall of 61.5%.<sup>81</sup> No global figures for the reregistration as a whole are available for the city, though Rigby estimates that in urban organisations there was an average drop of 10-15%, and Adelman suggests a fall of 46.8% for the party as a whole.<sup>82</sup> The example above would suggest that in some raions this was higher, but in the city between the VIII party congress and the eve of the party week membership only fell from 17,000 to 15,834, a fall of 6.7%, though this includes recruits to cover those purged.<sup>83</sup> The issue is confused by the large-scale mobilisations of the period, which Lenin considered also acted as a mechanism for purging the party of 'cowards and malcontents'. He added that 'Such a decrease in numbers in the party was an enormous increase in its strength and weight'.<sup>84</sup>

The 1919 reregistration was designed to purge the party of

80. Rigby, p.76.

81. P, 12 June 1919.

82. Rigby, p.77, Adelman, p.97.

83. VIII s"ezd RKP, pp.471, 544, n.78. In the party as a whole membership fell from 211,000 in the 36 central gubernii on the eve of the VIII congress to 120,000 in October 1919, a fall of 43% (Izvestiya TsK RKP, 15, 24 March 1920). An earlier issue states that between March and August 1919 membership fell from 350,000 to 150,000 (57%), ibid., 8, 2 December 1919.

84. Lenin PSS, vol.39, p.27.

the 'unhealthy' elements who had joined the party between the October Revolution and the VIII congress, especially the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia. At the VIII conference Krestinkii argued that the reregistration had cleared the way to opening the party to workers and peasants during the party weeks.<sup>85</sup>

5. Party weeks: mass recruitment or exclusivity

With the party weeks in the autumn of 1919 the history of party recruitment entered a qualitatively new phase. They were an attempt to solve the chronic problem of the shortage of personnel by a massive intake of workers (and poor peasants). They were designed to fulfil several functions: to improve the social composition of the party, to give the party a new reserve of manpower (with the petering out of the sympathisers' groups) as cadres in state posts and in the army, and also for political reasons, as a way of reasserting the party's authority in society. This aspect in particular was pointed out by Lenin in assessing the results of the weeks when he stressed that the voluntary enlistment of workers into the party at a time of grave military danger was a great moral victory.<sup>86</sup>

This was a desperate period for the Soviet government. It was still not apparent that Denikin's Moscow directive (3 July 1919), launching an attack spearheaded by Mamontov's cavalry on the central front to reach Moscow via Kursk, Orel, and Tula, was

85. VIII konf. RKP, p.26.

86. Lenin, 'The Results of the Party Week in Moscow and Our Tasks', PSS, vol. 39, p.234.

doomed to failure.<sup>87</sup> A series of plots were discovered in Moscow itself, including the Kadet inspired National Centre which, allegedly, planned to seize the city. On 25 September 1919 an explosion at the MK headquarters, organised by the LSR Donata Cherepanova working with the so-called Anarchist Underground, during a meeting attended by over 120 party activists killed 12 of the MPO's leading members, including the MK secretary V.M. Zagorskii, and A. Safonov, and wounded 55 more including M.S. Ol'minskii.<sup>88</sup>

The TSK plenum of 26 September 1919 decided on a rapid intake of workers and peasants into the party, though stressed that the aim of a membership of a million was not to be at the expense of quality.<sup>89</sup> As we shall see, while successful in doubling party membership by an increase of about 160,000<sup>90</sup> the mass recruitment of the weeks only aggravated the split in the party between an inner core of activists and the mass of the party.

The Moscow guberniya party organisation carried out its week from 21-28 September 1919 and succeeded in attracting only a thousand and a quarter new members.<sup>91</sup> It was a trial run for the

87. John Bradley, Civil War in Russia' 1917-1920, Batsford, London 1975, p.123.

88. L. Bychkov, Vzryv v Leont'evskom pereulke, M. 1934, pp.14-22.

89. Izvestiya TSK RKP, 6, 30 September 1919; VIII konf. RKP, pp.241-2. Petrograd had held the first party week in August 1919.

90. Izvestiya TSK RKP, 8, 2 December 1919.

91. Total recruitment was 1254: 1077 male workers, 112 female workers, 32 Red Army soldiers, and 33 peasants (and 10 intelligenty), (P, 6 November 1919). The most successful areas

city party week and the entrance requirements were the same as those for candidates.<sup>92</sup> The MK bureau on 1 October and the plenum on 2 October decided that an APW in every raion was to be appointed to organise the week, which was to be held from 8-15 October. To encourage recruitment and to avoid the disappointing results of the guberniya the entrance procedure was to be relaxed. The need for two written recommendations for workers, peasants, and soldiers was dropped, and the candidate stage was waived. The only check made was to ask the prospective member's fellow communist workers to vouch for the entrant. In many cases even this elementary point was dropped.<sup>93</sup>

The number of new members is usually given as 14,581,<sup>94</sup> but with the addition of the figures for some cells in Sushchevsko-Mar'inskii and Basmannyi raions this must be increased to 16,102.<sup>95</sup> Over half of the intake was of soldiers, and hence the large peasant group in Table 9. A third of the worker intake was women, a far higher proportion than their average in the MPO. The number of cells also increased during the week. In Blagushe

were the industrial uезда such as Klin, Orekh-Zuev, Bogorodsk and Kolomna, and where there had been detailed preparation. The results were the thirteenth highest total in the country but were still rather meagre. To compensate for this failure the MGK organised a separate peasant week (11-18 October) and Red Army week (1-9 October) which gave 500 and 200, respectively, XVI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP(b): protokoly, M. 1920, p.11.

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92. P, 7 September 1919.                      93. P, 26 October 1919.

94. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 15, 24 October 1919.

95. K.I. Bukov, G.A. Nagapetyan, 'Ideino-organizatsionnoe ukreplenie Moskovskoi partiinoi organizatsii v gody grazhdanskoi voiny', VI KPSS, 6, 1959, p.58.

Table 10

Results of the party week in Moscow, 8-19 October 1919

Raion	Male workers	Female workers	Soldiers	TOTAL
Gorodskoi	1000	450	2250	3700
Zamoskvorech'e	545	200	155	900
Basmannyi	450	357	1500	2307
Sokol'nicheskii	350	250	300	900
Al-Rostokinskii	64	31	-	95
Sush-Mar'inskii	90	70	259	419
Presnenskii	551	300	949	1800
Zhel-dorozhnyi	688	100	220	1048
Rog-Simonovskii	185	150	700	1035
Butyrskii	133	85	311	529
Blag-Lefortovskii	249	134	207	590
Khamovnicheskii	300	138	700	1138
Kremlin	57	23	40	120
TOTAL	4642	2348	7591	14581

Source: P, 26 October 1919.

the number of cells nearly doubled from 22 to 43.<sup>96</sup> In most raions membership doubled in the space of a week. In Sokol'nicheskii raion the 1075 members of July 1919<sup>97</sup> were now joined by another 900. The most spectacular increase was in the administrative raion of Gorodskoi. Here membership had risen from 1000 in June 1918 (incomplete figures)<sup>98</sup> to 1540 members and about 2000 sympathisers on the eve of the week.<sup>99</sup> After the week the numbers had risen to 6381,<sup>100</sup> an increase of over 400%. The greatest rise was in the Red Army membership, but a surprising

96. Manievich (ed), Ocherki po istorii revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya i bol'shevistskoi organizatsii v Baumanskom raione, M. 1928, p.170.

97. P, 26 July 1919.

98. Chugaev, p.76.

99. KT, 5 May 1920: 645 workers, 390 intelligentsia, 345 employees, and 160 unknown.

100. KT, 5 May 1920, of whom 2052 were in the Red Army, 1343 employees, 1815 workers, and 1171 unknown.

result in view of the aims of the party week was that while the number of workers here increased by 281%, that of office workers increased by a massive 389%. Once again, the lack of able (and willing) worker reserves in the factories and the changed occupational structure of the city was reflected in this intake of employees.

The mass intake of new members accentuated the split in the party, already noted in the MPO in early 1919, between the active party workers and the rank and file members, a division perceived as one between the verkhi and the nizy. The weeks therefore fuelled the controversy over the question of party democracy, were partially responsible for the bitterness of the party debate over this question in 1920-1, and were the background to the rise of the Workers' Opposition. The very structure of the week, as a sharp assault on the chronic recruitment problem, reflected the campaign mentality of the war years. In this intake a great mass of raw party members were inducted with in many cases, as later became apparent, an understanding of the party at odds with the official view. The mass intake, justified on the grounds of the need to strengthen the proletarian base of the party, sacrificed the idea of the party as a whole acting as the elite vanguard in favour of a two-tier party in which the leadership of the APWs was accentuated and the position of the RFPM undermined.

It was from this point that the debate over a 'narrow' party, restricted only to fully conscious members who would play an active part in decision-making, and a 'wide' party, with the greatest possible number of workers and peasants who would inevitably come under greater central direction, became an issue of debate. Following the weeks there was a general consensus

that recruitment would have to cease for a time. At the VIII party conference in December Lenin argued that the party 'gates' were now to be locked and great care taken in new recruitment.<sup>101</sup> Bukharin posed the issue more starkly: until the new members had been processed a temporary halt should be called to party recruitment.<sup>102</sup>

Nevertheless, membership of the MPO rose rapidly in 1920, punctuated only by the August reregistration (see below). There were calls for a new party week following the reregistration, but in the event not only was such mass recruitment rejected but in its place in 1921 a purge was launched. As Pravda put it, a united and strong party was more important than mere numbers.<sup>103</sup> Obviously the fear at this stage was that any large-scale increase in membership would only exacerbate the divisions within the party revealed by the party and trade union debates. At the same time the paper admitted that the great mass of party members lacked any theoretical grounding in Marxism but had joined the party out of 'instinct'.<sup>104</sup>

The theme was taken up by Lenin in his letters to the TsK (via Molotov) at the end of March 1922. He severely criticised the level of the majority of the party's 300-400,000 members and stated:

If we do not close our eyes to reality we must admit that at the present time the proletarian policy of the party is not determined by the character of its membership, but by the enormous undivided prestige enjoyed by the small group which might be called the old guard of the party.<sup>105</sup>

101. VIII konf. RKP, p.24.

102. ibid., p.166.

103. P, 9, 18 March 1921.

104. P, 30 March 1921.

105. Lenin PSS, vol.45, pp.18, 20.



Trotsky in The New Course in 1923 characterised the relations between the old and the new generations (pre- and post-October 1917). He claimed that after October there was a 'rapid, even abnormal, growth of the party'. The abnormality consisted in the influx both of inexperienced workers with low consciousness and of some alien elements, hangers-on and functionaries. The party preserved its character by relying on the 'internal dictatorship of the old guard':

...The party was living, as it were, on two storeys: the upper storey, where things are decided, and the lower storey, where all you do is learn of the decisions.<sup>106</sup>

The rapid recruitment of the party weeks therefore provided the sociological basis for these analyses of the 'old course' of the civil war which divided the party into 'a few thousand comrades, who form the leading cadres', and 'the rest of the mass whom they look upon only as an object of action'.<sup>107</sup> As Michael Farbman put it at the time:

It is only fair, however, to state that the inclination of the 'Old Guard' to favour the absolutism of the CC was not the chief reason for the development of the party on centralised lines. This must be attributed largely to its heterogeneity and to the unassimilable character of the great mass of the new adherents.<sup>108</sup>

From this point of view there is a clear connection between the dramatic settling of the question of a 'wide' or 'narrow' party by the Lenin Enrolment of 1924<sup>109</sup> and the rise of Stalin to

106. Leon Trotsky, The New Course, London 1956, pp.14-15.

107. ibid., p.18.

108 Michael S. Farbman, Bolshevism in Retreat, London 1923, p.165.

109. 24,622 people joined the MPO, 17,361 in the city alone (Moskovskaya organizatsiya RKP(b) v tsifrakh, issue 1, M. 1925, p.23). Membership increased from 53,121 on 1 January 1924 (Moskovskaya gorodskaya, p.28) to 77,743, an increase of 46.3%.

power on the back of the bureaucracy.<sup>110</sup>

The debate over a 'wide' or 'narrow' party raised questions of fundamental importance on the nature and role of the party. The implications of a 'wide' party have been described, but at the same time a 'narrow' party raised its own questions. The VIII party congress marked the transition from the generalised reregistrations of 1918 to the more purposive ones that followed where social and political criteria varied depending on the campaign of the time. It was no longer left to the 'market' to regulate entrance to anyone who supported the party and its aims. Now social background was elevated as a cardinal consideration in selecting party members. While understandably concerned about the falling proportion of worker recruitment, though this does not seem to have fallen as much as was feared (Table 9), and the clear evidence that many joined for opportunist reasons, this reinforced selective policy not only changed the party's relationship to non-proletarian sections of society, but also to the working class party membership itself. Henceforth the party leadership arrogated for itself direct control over recruitment and expulsion which it effected through purges and checks: the body of the party became increasingly malleable in the hands of the party leadership in this respect as the party member became exposed to the threat of expulsion, firstly for social reasons, and then for political ones.

110. Initially welcoming the Enrolment, Trotsky later argued that it had dissolved the revolutionary vanguard and thus freed the bureaucracy from its control, Leon Trotsky, Revolution Betrayed, New Park Publications, London 1973, p.98.

6. Training and educational level of MPO members

The party week starkly posed the question of the educational and political level of the mass of party membership. At the VIII party conference soon after the week Sorin asserted that:

It is no secret that the ideological level of our party, especially in the provinces, is not very high. A significant part of the party membership, probably the majority, are politically semi-literate.<sup>111</sup>

And he went on to argue that the thousands who had joined required political processing.<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, Zinoviev argued at the conference that the new members were to be 'used' immediately by involvement in party work,<sup>113</sup> and it was this view which was reflected in the conference theses on the new recruits which stressed that they were to be actively employed in 'the construction of the new communist society'.<sup>114</sup> In other words, they were to join the state bureaucracy and the army. As Rigby puts it, 'the party leadership was proceeding to expose the new crop of communists to precisely those influences which had led to the "corruption" and "careerism" of so many of their predecessors'.<sup>115</sup> The managerial functions of the party were given priority over maintaining the link with the workers in the factories through the party cell, and it was this which led to the grave crisis of 1920-1 as the breach between the APWs, on the one hand, and the RFPM and ordinary workers, on the other, widened.

111. VIII konf. RKP, p.31.

112. ibid., p.32.

113. ibid., p.139.

114. ibid., pp.200-3.

115. Rigby, pp.81-2.

The Tsk meeting of 18 May 1918 had emphasised the need to raise the ideological level of the party membership. Up to then no formal provisions had been made for the processing of new members. A school under VTsIK was founded at this time by Sverdlov to train cadres for party and soviet posts.<sup>116</sup> Gradually a network of party schools was established in Moscow to serve the city organisation. They ranged from those serving the whole city under the MK, down to lecture courses organised by clubs. By December 1918 there were already 8 schools in the city with over 200 students, meeting two or three times a week in the evenings.<sup>117</sup> Most of them were temporary institutions lasting only for the duration of a particular course.

The December 1918 reglament (instruction) for the RPOs (see below) for the first time in the MPO stressed that it was desirable for every party member to undergo a course of political literacy.<sup>118</sup> In 1919 the main emphasis was to involve young communists in the schools,<sup>119</sup> and in general party education languished at the time. It was only with the party weeks that the question of party education became a priority. In November 1919 the MK took urgent measures to create a series of schools for the 15,000 'new' communists of the week.<sup>120</sup> A delegate

116. Initially it provided only short courses but with increasing demand it became more organised and by autumn 1919 it was transformed into the Sverdlov university for the training of party and soviet activists.

117. Kommunar, 21 December 1918. 118. P, 11 January 1919.

119. The MK RKSM in September 1919 opened a special school catering for the Komsomol member. The first intake of 50 was designed to form the core of future cadres, P, 25 September 1919.

120. Vestnik propagandy, 8, 12 July 1920, p.78.

meeting in Krasnopresnenskii raion on 15 March 1920 extended the idea by insisting that all recruits were to attend a party school.<sup>121</sup> A course in the schools was to serve as an additional screening device complementary to their pedagogic functions.

On the eve of the unification of the city and guberniya organisations the question of recruitment was once again raised at the XVII guberniya party conference (13-14 May 1920). A certain Korolev argued that mass recruitment was destroying party organisation in the localities, and insisted that if educational facilities did not improve then recruitment would have to cease altogether. He estimated that 90% of communists were insufficiently educated to be party members.<sup>122</sup> Other speakers supported his argument. Their fears over the quality of the new recruits were to be confirmed. Within a few months at least half of those who had joined during the party week in Moscow were to leave or be expelled.<sup>123</sup>

Political illiteracy was compounded by inadequacies in the general educational level of the party in Moscow, reflecting the general level of illiteracy in the city noted in chapter 2. Table 11 shows the marked contrast in the city between those with higher education (3.2%) and those with only basic primary education (67.9%). The greater number of those with higher and medium education in the city compared to the guberniya and the rest of the country is significant, and reflects the different

121. KT, 18 march 1920.

122. Vestnik propagandy, 8, 12 July 1920, pp.23, 25.

123. V Mosk. gubpartkonf., p.26.

social composition of the city organisation and the concentration of party activists there.<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, the low educational level of the party reinforced the gulf between the communist and the specialist.

Table 11

Educational level of the MPO on 1 September 1920

	City		Guberniya		Total		% in	% in
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	38 gubs	36 gubs
Education								
Higher	944	3.2	33	0.6	977	2.9	1.1	0.7
Medium	5,555	18.6	775	14.3	6,330	18.0	13.1	11.4
Primary	20,244	67.9	4,222	78.1	24,466	69.4	71.1	71.5
Self-								
educated	2,033	6.8	240	4.4	2,273	6.4	10.6	12.1
Students	383	1.3	20	0.4	403	1.1	0.7	0.4
Illiterate	218	0.7	27	0.5	245	0.7	2.6	3.3
Unknown	443	1.5	89	1.6	532	1.5	0.7	0.5
TOTAL	29,820	100	5,406	100	35,226	100	100	100

Source: Materialy po statistike, pp.16-17.

The main work of party education was conducted by the system of raion and ward (uchastok) schools, with the most able students in the city party schools. In July 1920 there were two city schools with 300 students,<sup>125</sup> and in September after the summer break only one school with 63 students.<sup>126</sup> Between September 1920 and February 1921 the number of ward schools increased from 11 to 55, and the number of raion schools from 1 to 8. At the later date a total of 2918 students were enrolled, 2573 in ward

124. By April 1921 the percentage with higher education in the joint MPO had fallen to 1.69, and those with medium education to 16.29, while those with primary education had increased to 75.39. Of the rest 4.67 were educated at home and 1.96 were illiterate, P, 14 April 1921.

125. Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., p.4.

126. Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.38.

schools and 345 in the raion schools.<sup>127</sup> There were also special schools organised by the MK military department. By June 1920 it had organised 33 of these, by July 43, and by September 49.<sup>128</sup>

These figures testify to a far greater effort in party education in 1920. However, the achievements were more impressive on paper than in reality and the party school network was often criticised. A report in June 1920 singled out the raion schools for special criticism. They covered large areas, lacked competent instructors, and lecturers often failed to turn up.<sup>129</sup> The two city schools of July 1920, with 150 students apiece, were criticised and plans were drawn up for a single improved school for 250 students.<sup>130</sup> At the IX party conference E.A. Preobrazhenskii attacked the poor state of the schools.<sup>131</sup>

In practice, as he recognised, faced with a multiplicity of tasks and a shortage of personnel, the training of communists ranked fairly low among the priorities of local party organisations. By the X party congress plans were drawn up to integrate them into the general system of education under Glavpolitprosvet (chief political education board), the glavk of the educational world, whose aim was the 'state propagation of communism' aimed at the non-party masses, but with the subsidiary

127. ibid., p.38; Otchet MK za yanvar' 1921g., M. 1921, pp.32-3.

128. Otchet o rabote voennogo otдела-MK-ta RKP za vremya sushchestvovaniya s 15-go aprelya 1919 goda, M. 1920, p.15.

129. KT, 24 June 1920.

130. Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., p.4.

131. IX konferentsiya RKP(b), sentyabr' 1920 goda: protokoly, M. 1972, p.124.

function of training party members,<sup>132</sup> but as we shall see (Chapter 7) the party schools retained their autonomy.

The discussion over the training of neophytes was a reflection of the changes in the party process. At the II congress of the RSDRP in 1903 Lenin had argued that the party member had not only to agree with the tenets of the party, but also had to play an active role in the party. Now, after the party week, the discussion over the training of new members revealed that for the mass of the membership learning in the process of participation in party work was to be supplemented by regular lessons in party ideology. This was cause and reflection of the decline in the self-activity of the party rank and file. The party member as activist and agent rather than creative participant in party life is revealed by the following comments of the editors of the Moscow guberniya journal for propagandists:

We have no time at the moment to work out a 'complete world view' out of the inexhaustible treasure house of Marxism. We must receive precisely that ration of learning that is necessary for today's struggle, and no more. The worker, because of the lack of supplies, receives from the state a portion of bread not in those quantities that a man in general needs, but as much as he requires so that he can work and not collapse from exhaustion: it is the same with Marxism; it must be released in those doses as are necessary so that each of us can be a fighting political force, and no more. Anything more and academism begins, knowledge for the sake of knowledge, refusal of practical work with the excuse of deepening one's understanding of the world.<sup>133</sup>

The normative functions of party education came into prominence as the new cohorts were moulded to suit the needs of the party.

132. X s"ezd RKP(b), mart-aprel' 1921 goda: stenograficheskii otchet, M. 1963, p.594.

133. Vestnik propagandy, 3, 24 September 1919, p.4.



7. Recruitment and reregistration in 1920 and early 1921

Despite the calls for the 'door to be locked' and for the new members to be processed following the party week, recruitment in Moscow continued at a fast rate into 1920. In March 1920 alone the city organisation gained 1792 new members:

Table 12

Membership dynamic of MPO in March 1920

Raion	Joined	Left	Total	Cells
Gor	190	216	7,279	211
Kham	42	10	2,028	55
R-Sim	196	8	2,808	81
Presn	387	-	6,786	81
Basman	337	225	5,772	87
Butyr	101	17	1,620	40
S-Mar	-	10	2,225	40
Sok	504	23	2,507	58
Zam	235	20	3,940	118
B-Lef	65	18	1,057	57
ZhD	554	135	3,283	87
Kremlin	54	191	1,726	19
TOTAL	2,665	873	41,031	934

Sources: KT, 25 April 1920; KM, cols.669-70. These figures are higher than those given in Table 7 and represent contemporary estimates.

These figures show that there had been an increase of about 5000 members since the party week of October 1919, and they illustrate the high degree of flux in the MPO. In March 1920 alone there was a turnover of about 8% of membership. Such a high level of instability in the RPOs led to the inflated membership figures revealed during the reregistration later in the year.

The March 1920 Moscow statute tightened up the recruitment procedure. In most raions acceptance into the party had previously been formalised at delegate meetings. It was now admitted that this had often consisted of a purely formal

recitation of names. Now, for the better screening of recruits, acceptance became the responsibility of the RK and only then was the matter referred to the membership meeting for confirmation.<sup>134</sup> Once again functions were being transferred to committees from general meetings of communists.

Expulsions from the party continued throughout the period, and reportedly a total of 6745 were expelled between 1918 and 1921 from the city and guberniya organisations,<sup>135</sup> though there is no way of telling how this figure was calculated. In 1920 they appear to have increased, or at least more attention was devoted to them. The typical reasons for expulsion included insubordination to party discipline, not attending meetings, ignoring the orders of the cell, personal request due to age or health, drunkenness, card playing, misuse of factory stores, and desertion from the labour front.<sup>136</sup> Between May and August 1920 the Sokol'nicheskii RPO expelled 50 members,<sup>137</sup> or just under 3% of its total membership. Clearly the party was not filled with Rakhmetovs.<sup>138</sup>

Over the same period as above in Sokol'nicheskii raion another 400 members and 230 candidates were added to the organisation's ranks, and the number of cells increased from 116

134. KT, 21 March 1921.

135. Ocherki ist. MO KPSS, p.366.

136. KT, 20 June 1920. A delegate meeting in Basmannyi raion, for example, on 28 March 1920 expelled three responsible party workers for drunkenness, and their cases were transferred to the courts, KT, 1 April 1920.

137. P, 10 September 1920.

138. Rakhmetov, a character in Chernyshevskii's 'What is to be Done?', the new model self-abnegatory revolutionary, echoed in Lenin's own life and in his 1902 pamphlet of the same title.

to 140.<sup>139</sup> The outstanding feature of 1920 was indeed the great fluidity of membership: large numbers leaving through expulsion or mobilisation, and many also joining. In the two months of June and July 1920 alone total membership of the joint organisation increased, according to contemporary estimates, by 7.1% (2843 members and 619 candidates) and the number of cells by 39 to make a total of 1328.<sup>140</sup>

Once again fears over the composition of the party prompted the IX party congress to call for a second all-Russian reregistration. This time, however, there were broader objectives. A new standard party card was to replace those issued by the local organisations aimed at the more accurate accounting of party members. The move had an economic logic in this period of compulsory labour duty and assignment in that the profession of communists could be established and thus directed to where those skills were required. A three-fold categorisation of members was proposed for the MPO by O.A. Pyatnitskii that explicitly gave priority to those who had joined before 1917. The second category comprised those who had joined at the beginning of the revolution and who had not belonged to another party, and the third consisted of recruits since September 1919 and the victory over Denikin.<sup>141</sup> The aim of the division was to ensure a flow of rank and file members to replace the mobilised activists. Its effect, however, was to reinforce the divisions in the party based on length of membership.

139. p, 10 September 1920. These figures are for the joint Sokol'nicheskii and Alekseevo-Rostokinskii RPOs.

140. Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., p.7. 141. KT, 28 August 1920.

For the first time the public nature of the purge was stressed.<sup>142</sup> Previous ones had been carried out largely as internal disciplinary measures. The open nature of this reregistration was designed to emphasise the party's close links with the masses, but precisely reflected concern over the breach between the party and the working class. The MK appealed to the public for any information on misdemeanours on the part of any communists - not only in the present but also in the past. All those unmasked, the MK promised, would be expelled. All information was to be factual and signed<sup>143</sup> and the MK was at pains to stress that all information would be treated with discretion to allay fears that informants would be liable to recriminations. The reregistration commission promised that no-one giving information would suffer in any way.<sup>144</sup>

The reregistration was to have begun in Moscow from 1 July 1920, but in fact began from 1 August with recruitment halted from 15 July. In each raion a reregistration commission was formed with two representatives from the MK and one from the RK.<sup>145</sup> For the party as a whole the fall in numbers was less than in the 1919 reregistration,<sup>146</sup> but in Moscow a massive decline was registered (Table 13):

142. Later purges were to make great play of public participation in the purge process, cf., the 1929 purge, E.M. Yaroslavskii (ed), Kak provodit' chistku partii, M/L. 1929, pp.23-5.

143. KT, 2 July 1920

144. KT, 21 July 1920.

145. KT, 1 August 1920.

146. Adelman, p.97, gives a figure of 28.6%.

Table 13

The August 1920 reregistration

	Before		After			Members				
	Membs	Membs	Cands	Tot	incr- ease	decr- ease	expe- lled	red to cand	not pres- ent	on miss- ions
Baum	5048	3422	304	3726	-	1626	69	-	1557	-
Gor	9787	5749	1338	7087	-	4038	19	19	4000	-
Zam	4784	2867	541	3408	-	1897	27	460	1310	100
K-P	12251	6728	-	-	-	5527	112	74	5337	-
R-S	1709	1229	76	1305	-	480	19	85	259	121
Sok	2681	1870	326	2196	-	811	154	33	624	-
Kham	1821	1204	315	1519	-	517	73	31	300	213
City										
TOT	38061	23069	2900	25969	-	14992	473	702	13383	434
Gub										
TOT	5328	4572	-	-	157	913	140	198	456	119
TOT	43,389	27,641	-	-	157	15905	613	900	13838	553

Source: Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.6.

In the city there was a 39.4% fall in membership, but only 1.2% were actually expelled, while 1.8% were reduced to candidate status, a total of only 3% in some way disciplined.<sup>147</sup> A far more significant figure is the massive 35.2% who for one reason or another failed to attend the reregistration.<sup>148</sup> Part of the explanation for this large group is, as Soviet sources stress,

147. As a percentage of those who actually presented themselves for reregistration (24,244) these figures rise to 1.9% and 2.9%, respectively, a total of 4.8%. There were large variations between raions, possibly reflecting harsher or softer commissions: in Zamoskvorech'e the highest proportion were disciplined at 10.1%, or 14.4% of the number who turned up; while in Gorodskoi the least were disciplined, 0.4% and 0.6%, respectively.

148. This excludes the 434 registered as absent on assignments. Here also there were great variations between raions: the lowest proportion was in Rogozhsko-Simonovskii at 15.1%, while in Gorodskoi raion the proportion of those not attending reached 40.9%, and in Krasnopresnenskii 43.4%. Both Rigby, p.84, who cites a figure of 9% expelled from Sokol'nicheskii raion, and Adelman, p.97, who gives a figure of 22.7% purged in the city and guberniya, have cited inaccurate sources.

poor book-keeping which failed to account for communists who came and left the city on various courses, assignments and military dispositions. Rigby suggests that a large proportion took the opportunity to leave the party, an indication that 'unworthy' elements were still able to join. Further, as Rigby points out in connection with Kronstadt where a quarter of the party organisation dropped out, this large category takes on political significance in the light of later opposition to party policies.<sup>149</sup>

The reregistration revealed serious weaknesses in the party. Dorofeev's claim that there many communists in the city who did not know who was the chairman of the Moscow soviet<sup>150</sup> was borne out by the reregistration. The majority of those demoted to candidacy were guilty of not knowing the party programme.<sup>151</sup> A large proportion of those expelled had joined during the party week, and political illiteracy was the main charge against them.<sup>152</sup> An MK circular following the reregistration admitted the wide level of political illiteracy in the MPO, and argued that it was not restricted to the party week cohort but included those who had joined much earlier. The circular insisted on

149. Rigby, p.84.

150. P, 2 September 1920.

151. Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.8. Of the 613 who left the party 92 did so by request, 284 (64%) were expelled for not fulfilling party obligations, 34 for job-associated offences, 33 for careerism, 28 for religious belief, 26 for drunkenness, 24 for speculation, and the rest for unknown reasons (loc.cit.). Of the 112 members expelled in Krasnopresnenskii raion 82 were men and 30 women, 43 (38.4%) were workers, 44 soviet employees, 17 in the Red Army, and 8 military academy students, KT, 23 September 1920.

152. In Krasnopresnenskii 58 (51.8%) out of the 112 expelled (KT, 24 September 1920); in Sokol'nicheskii 60 (39%) out of the 154, KT, 3 September 1920.

improved party schools and compulsory attendance for all party members and not just recruits.<sup>153</sup> As Bukharin put it, the party had not succeeded in 'digesting' the new members.<sup>154</sup>

Despite this the reregistration was followed by calls for a repetition of the party weeks to strengthen links with workers.<sup>155</sup> The idea was not taken up though a vigorous discussion took place at the time. Instead, piecemeal mechanisms were introduced. The IX party conference in September 1920 decided to make it easier for workers and peasants to join the party, and to erect greater obstacles for others.

There are conflicting claims over the pattern of recruitment between the end of the 1920 reregistration and the X party congress in March 1921. At the congress Bukharin argued that there had been a great numerical increase since the last congress,<sup>156</sup> while the Workers' Opposition insisted that there had been a mass exodus of workers, above all during the debates since the reregistration.<sup>157</sup> Numbers as a whole did increase in the MPO in this period. In September there was a large increase of nearly a fifth,<sup>158</sup> presumably because the ban on recruitment during the registration had created a back-log of party hopefuls.

153. Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., pp.49-51.

154. P, 17 September 1920.

155. N. Meshcheryakov in P, 26 September 1920.

156. X s"ezd RKP, p.326.

157. ibid., pp.236-7.

158. Khamovnicheskii RPO increased by 27%, Krasnopresnenskii by 12.3%, Rogozhsko-Simonovskii by 34.1%, an especially interesting figure since the raion was heavily working class, Sokol'nicheskii by 11.9%, and Zamoskvorech'e by 5.5%. In the five raions there was a total increase of 1957 new members, an average of 18.2%, Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g, p.6; Otchet MK za oktyabr' 1920g., p.17.

In October 1920 recruitment slowed to only 335 new members in 5 raions, and at the same time 455 members left the city and 329 arrived, giving a net increase of only 1.2%.<sup>159</sup>

The pattern of a steady turnover of members as communists left on assignments and new ones arrived is once again illustrated. This particularly affected the army communists, who in October 1920 in the five raions represented a third of total membership, and 38.9% of total male membership.<sup>160</sup> In late 1920, as the MPO was gripped by political debate, membership grew at a faster rate. In the proletarian Baumanskii raion, the centre of support for the Workers' Opposition, membership between November 1920 and January 1921 increased by 1067, representing an increase of nearly a third over the September 1920 level.<sup>161</sup> In December 1920 alone membership here increased by 712.<sup>162</sup> Part of the increase can be attributed to the movement of communists to the city and demobilised soldiers, but significant recruitment still continued. By January 1921 there had been an increase of 32.8%

159. 22 members and 7 candidates were expelled in that month, and 5 died. The greatest net increase was once again in Rogozhsko-Simonovskii RPO of 7.9%, Otchet MK za oktyabr' 1920g., p.17.

160. 5371 out of a total of 15,855 (13,793 of whom were men), Otchet MK za oktyabr' 1920g., p.17.

161. KT, 5 February 1921.

162. Membership also increased in other raions. In December 1920 the Zamoskvorech'e RPO gained 500 members (KT, 30 January 1921). In Sokol'nicheskii raion in the last four months of 1920 membership increased by 531 to 2473, an increase of 27.3% (Otchet Sokol'nicheskogo raionnogo komiteta RKP za vremya s 1/IX 1920g. po 1/I 1921g., M. 1921, p.7). The rise was not a result of an increased military presence: over this period the proportion of soldiers actually fell from 26.7% (Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.9) to 17.8%, Otchet Sok. RK, p.7.



of members in the joint organisation since the reregistration,<sup>163</sup> but what proportion were new members or workers is not known. Therefore the Workers' Opposition claim that workers were leaving the party must remain unproved.

The major party purge ordered by the X party congress lies beyond the scope of this work but some comments are called for. The level of actual expulsions increased quite dramatically in comparison to the 1920 reregistration. While the party as a whole lost a quarter of its total membership,<sup>164</sup> the city organisation lost 18.2% of its membership through direct expulsions.<sup>165</sup> Service has recently confirmed that the purge was used to punish oppositionists,<sup>166</sup> and this was facilitated by the fact that for the first time the purge commissions were independent of local party organisations.<sup>167</sup> There is no direct evidence that the purge was used to punish oppositionists in Moscow, but of the 7270 expelled in the joint organisation a high proportion were accused of insubordination, a charge that could cover a multitude of sins including oppositional activity, and a full 12.4% left of their own accord (46% of these were workers) which indicates a certain level of dissatisfaction with party

163. In January 1921 there were 36,720 members and 9280 candidates in the joint organisation (V Mosk. gubpartkonf., p.3). The X congress mandate commission reported a total membership of 41,000 for the joint organisation (X s"ezd RKP, p.763).

164. Rigby, p.97.

165. A total of 5200 were expelled in the city and 2070 in the guberniya. Of the 5101 in the city for whom details are available 1314 (25.7%) were workers, 3159 (61.9%) were employees and office workers, 378 (7.4%) were peasants, and 250 others, Izvestiya MK RKP(b), 1, 20 March 1922, pp.14-15.

166. Service, pp.164-5.

167. Rigby, p.96.

policies.<sup>168</sup> As in the 1920 reregistration information from non-party people was encouraged.<sup>169</sup> The accumulated experience of the reregistrations during the civil war provided the essential organisational experience for the new model purges.

#### 8. Analysis of MPO membership, 1918-1921

The city party organisation, and even more so the guberniya organisation, never represented more than a very small proportion of their respective populations. In mid-1918 the party as a whole was less than one per cent of the total population of the city<sup>170</sup> and 1.6% of the independent population. By September 1920 these proportions had increased to just under 3% and 4.6%, respectively.<sup>171</sup> In 1918 there was one communist for every 62 of the independent population, and by September 1920 this had increased to 1 communist for every 22. Given the party's

168. Of the 7270 expelled 3614 were employees, 2090 workers, 1027 peasants, and 539 others. 417 workers left of their own accord, 232 were expelled for 'passivity', 250 for insubordination, 108 for 'wavering'. 157 as alien elements, and so on. The high number of employees expelled marks the purge's second main concern, and the 583 ex-members of other parties indicates the third (Izvestiya MK RKP(b), 1, pp.16-8). The 'Declaration of the 22' in early 1922 also pointed to the departure of workers from the party: according to them 306 left the MPO between May and August 1921 (XI s"ezd RKP, p.754).

169. Lenin PSS, vol.44, p.123.

170. If we take party membership at 15,000 and the city population at 1,716,022, the party membership comes out as 0.87% of the population.

171. Following the 1920 reregistration the membership of the guberniya organisation was 4572. At the same time the population of the guberniya was 2,161,000, of whom 1,340,574 were rural and 821,326 urban (P, 1 October 1920). At that time the party represented 0.2% of the total population of the guberniya, 0.6% of the urban population, and 4.1% of the industrial working class. There were only 700 peasant communists out of over one million peasants.

vanguard role the relative smallness of the MPO is not surprising, but at the same time the party in the city was a small proportion of the working class. At the end of 1920 the city party had about 6000 of its members employed in industrial enterprises, or just under 7% of the total industrial workforce of 87,000. A large part of the working class was either not willing to join the party, or was prevented from doing so by the general rules governing entrance.

Party representation, or 'saturation', in each age group showed a marked disparity between a fairly high saturation for the 18-24 population age group, of whom communists represented 6.4%, even higher saturation in the 25-29 group at 7.1%, and thereafter falling sharply to 4.3% for the 30-39 year olds and reaching the miniscule representation of 0.9% for those over 40 years old (Appendix 3, Table 18). This reveals not only the effect of the historical persecution before February 1917, but that recruitment in 1917 and after was overwhelmingly from amongst young people: those over 40 were a 'lost generation' as far as the party was concerned.

The 1920 reregistration allowed the social composition of the raions to be established for the first time (Table 14). The low percentage of peasant party members in the guberniya is noteworthy. The greatest concentration of office workers was in the two inner raions of Gorodskoi and Khamovnicheskii, dominated as they were by the offices of the commissariats and local government bodies. The proportion of workers was higher in the outlying industrial raions. If we compare the preceding table with that of the social pattern of recruitment (Table 9) we can see that the figure of 55% of the city organisation being workers

Table 14

Social composition of RPOs in August 1920

	Workers		Peasants		Employees		Intelligentsia		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Baum	1722	54.0	402	12.6	727	22.8	337	10.6	3188
Gor	2596	51.5	338	6.7	1266	23.2	935	18.6	5035
Zam	1664	59.6	286	10.2	591	21.2	251	9.0	2792
K-P	4012	54.0	1130	15.2	1530	20.6	754	10.2	7426
R-S	630	65.7	114	11.9	168	17.5	47	4.9	959
Sok	1228	63.0	163	8.4	454	23.3	104	5.3	1949
Kham	743	46.4	216	13.5	371	23.1	271	17.0	1601
City									
TOT	12595	54.9	2649	11.5	5007	21.8	2699	11.8	22940
Gub									
TOT	2960	59.6	700	14.1	1089	21.9	217	4.4	4966
MPO									
TOT	15555	55.8	3349	12.0	6096	21.8	2916	10.4	27906
RKP									
TOT	96611	45.2	40534	19.0	48814	22.8	10302	4.8	213669

Sources: KM, col.676; Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.18. Figures for the 38 gubernii from Lichnyi sostav RKP(b) v 1920 god, M. 1921, p.23. Nationally there were also 12,581 craftsmen and 5327 others. This table probably exaggerates the proportion of workers and intelligentsia, cf. Table 15.

by profession is an exaggeration. Even if we accept this figure it illustrates that the party week in Moscow, when nearly 7000 workers joined, had no more than restored the balance for the percentage of workers in the city organisation. Table 15 is probably more accurate.

Table 15

Social composition of MPO in August 1920

	City		Guberniya		Total		% in 36 gubs exc. M. + P.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Workers	14496	49	2803	52	17299	49		40
Employees	6047	20	1026	19	7073	20		21
Peasants	2188	7	437	8	2625	8		22
Intelligentsia	1999	7	181	3	2180	6		5
Craftsmen	905	3	205	4	1110	3		7
Others	2676	9	572	11	3248	9		4
Unknown	1509	5	182	3	1691	5		1
TOTAL	29820	100	5406	100	35226	100		100

Source: Materialy po statistike, pp.22-3, 80-1.

The large number of peasants in the city organisation is because no separate table was made for members of the Red Army. In Moscow the percentage of workers was higher than in the party as a whole. Another general indication of the social composition of the MPO is the distribution of cells. In September 1920 less than a third (30%) of the 776 cells in six raions were in enterprises, while the single largest group were those in offices (31%), with the rest in the army (26%) and in transport (12%) (Table 20).<sup>172</sup> Out of the 1537 cells in the joint organisation in April 1921 515 (33.5%) were factory and transport, 470 (30.5%) soviet, 119 (7.7%) rural, and 433 (28.2%) military.<sup>173</sup> Membership of a factory cell, however, did not automatically entail employment in a manual task, as Zelenskii, by then secretary of the MK, pointed out at the XI party congress in March 1922.<sup>174</sup>

From Table 16 it can be seen that in Moscow city 9791 (33%) of party members were in a production trade union, 5712 (19%) in other trade unions, and with no information on 14,317 (48%) of

172. Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.9. There were 909 cells in the city at the time but no information on the 133 cells in Zamoskvorech'e.

173. VI Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsia RKP. 25-28 iyunya 1921g.: doklady, kratkii otchet MK i rezolyutsii, M. 1921, p.31.

174. XI s"ezd RKP, p.443. There are some dubious figures for the social composition of the 7 raion and 17 uezd party organisations on 1 March 1921, reported as 56% worker, 22% employee, 12% peasant, and 10% intelligentsia. These figures cover only 33,759 out of a reported MPO membership of 49,154. The figure of 56% worker is recognised as an exaggeration by the source, which states that many employees claimed to be workers (possibly in view of the impending purge), and that others supported their claim to be workers on the grounds that they did not own any property, Byulleten' MK RKP, 1, 8 April 1921; p, 14 April 1921.

Table 16

Profession and trade union membership of MPO members in August 1920

	Profession		TU membership	
	No.	%	No.	%
Miners	161	0.4	109	0.3
Woodworkers	1082	2.9	236	0.7
Metalworkers-technicians	918	2.4	3549	10.0
-others	6107	16.3	"	"
Printers	970	2.6	754	2.1
Stationers	42	0.1	38	0.1
Foodworkers	630	1.7	429	1.2
Leatherworkers	908	2.4	464	1.3
Agriculture/forestry-agronomists	132	0.3	178	0.5
-others	3159	8.4	"	"
Construction workers	1134	3.0	325	0.9
Transport-drivers, mates	190	0.5	2555	7.2
-other railway jobs	542	1.4	"	"
-waterworkers	223	0.6	"	"
-local transport	713	1.9	"	"
Chemical workers	464	1.2	516	1.5
Clothing workers	1202	3.2	544	1.5
Tobacco workers	40	0.1	94	0.3
Textile workers	1546	4.1	2209	6.3
Unskilled workers	1865	5.0	-	-
Municipal workers	420	1.1	1108	3.1
Public feeding, hostels	230	0.6	166	0.5
Medical-doctors, midwives, vets	194	0.5	725	2.1
-others	563	1.5	"	"
Office workers-statisticians, etc.	555	1.5	"	"
-others	5771	15.4	3395	9.6
Communications workers	768	2.0	407	1.1
Education-teachers	746	2.0	629	1.8
-others	493	1.3	"	"
Cultural workers	383	1.0	129	0.4
Military specialists	546	1.4		
Without profession	2568	6.8		
Not known	2249	6.0		
Not belonging to TU or not known			16667	47.3
TOTAL	37514	100	35226	100

Source: Materialy po statistike, pp.28-9, 52-3.

29,820. Ten per cent of the joint organisation's members were in the metal TU, 7% in transport, 10% in the office workers trade union, and 6% in the textile union. The single largest profession of MPO members was metalworking, reflecting Lenin's idea of the advanced consciousness associated with that

profession. Less satisfactory for Lenin was the second largest group, that of soviet employees. Many chose to name this profession as their speciality even if they had not been occupied in it for any length of time to cover, from the Bolshevik point of view, a less salubrious profession.

A national sample of party members in October 1919 revealed that only 11% of party membership were actually working in factories. More than 60% were employed in state and party posts, and another quarter were in the Red Army, often occupying the key posts. So less than a quarter of the party was in its rank and file.<sup>175</sup> This clearly showed the tendency for party members to move from the factory to non-manual or military work during war communism. The situation in Moscow in 1920 is shown by Table 17.

The single largest occupational group for MPO members was in the various soviet institutions (27.4%), followed by industrial enterprises, including economic management (22.9%) and the Red Army (18.3%). The corresponding figures for the party as a whole of 213,669 members in 38 gubernii are 34.7%, 14.1%, and 20.7%, and in 36 gubernii with 156,751 members (excluding Moscow and Petrograd) 36.5%, 11.8%, and 20%. Therefore in the party as a whole, and especially in Petrograd, the managerial functions of the party stood in starker contrast than in Moscow where the party was larger than any other single organisation and the weight of industry was more pronounced. Nevertheless, over a quarter of the Moscow party was involved in office work in the

175. Rigby, p.81; Izvestiya TsK RKP, 15, 24 March 1920. The sample was of 17,312 communists.

Table 17

Occupation of MPO members in August 1920

	City		Guberniya		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Industrial enterprises:						
- responsible workers	161	0.5	43	0.8	204	0.6
- of whom from workers	82	51.0	22	51.2	104	51.0
- office/accounts	187	0.6	135	2.5	322	0.9
- junior employees	22	0.1	7	0.1	29	0.1
- workers	5994	20.1	1522	2.8	7516	21.3
<u>Total</u>	6364	21.3	1707	31.6	8071	22.9
Artisan and craft industry	423	1.4	93	1.7	516	1.5
Agriculture	739	2.5	270	5.0	1009	2.9
Transport:						
- responsible workers	225	0.7	4	0.1	229	0.6
- of whom from workers	92	40.9	2	50.0	94	41.0
- office/accounts	202	0.7	28	0.5	230	0.7
- junior employees/workers	1152	3.9	95	1.8	1247	3.5
<u>Total</u>	1579	5.3	127	2.3	1706	4.8
Soviet institutions:						
- Responsible workers	2629	8.8	719	13.3	3346	9.5
- of whom from workers	309	11.7	281	39.1	590	18.0
- office/accounts	3108	10.4	530	9.8	3638	10.3
- junior employees	2427	8.1	271	5.0	2698	7.6
<u>Total</u>	8164	27.4	1520	28.1	9684	27.4
Red Army:						
- political leaders	118	0.4	15	0.3	133	0.4
- higher staff officers	90	0.3	14	0.3	104	0.3
- other staff officers	1126	3.8	208	3.8	1334	3.8
- admin. and medical	899	3.0	191	3.5	1090	3.1
- cadets	1247	4.2	41	0.7	1288	3.6
- soldiers - line units	1782	6.0	337	6.2	2119	6.0
- non-line units	313	1.0	60	1.1	373	1.1
<u>Total</u>	5575	18.7	866	16.0	6441	18.3
Party organisation:						
- total in party work	1461	4.9	469	8.7	1930	5.4
- of whom in party work	540	1.8	124	2.3	664	1.9
Trade unions: only						
- responsible workers	288	1.0	122	2.2	410	1.2
- of whom from workers	152	52.8	71	58.2	223	54.0
- FZK members	363	1.2	233	4.3	596	1.2
- office/accounts/juniors	27	0.1	9	0.2	36	0.1
<u>Total</u>	678	2.8	364	6.7	1042	2.5
House workers	14	0.1	4	0.1	18	0.1
Not working	264	0.9	29	0.5	293	0.8
No information	5480	18.4	302	5.9	5782	16.4
TOTAL	29820	100	5406	100	35226	100

Source: Materialy po statistike, pp.42-7,90-3.



institutions, and only just over a fifth (21.3%) were actually involved in manual production work. Another fifth at the time were serving soldiers in Moscow. Agriculture was not very significant in the joint organisation, which at 2.9% of the total membership reflected the minimal presence of the party amongst the peasantry in Moscow guberniya. In the party as a whole 7.7% were involved in agriculture, and excluding the two capitals 9.5%. The party during the civil war became one not so much in the working class as one concerned with management and the army.

The corps of key party activists devoted exclusively to party work consisted of 664 members of the MPO (1.9%), while in Petrograd and the party as a whole the proportion was higher, nearly 3% in the former and 3.4% (7295) in the latter, and 3.9% (6004) if the two capitals are excluded, illustrating that the development of the party apparatus in the localities imposed a proportionately greater strain on these organisations than in the relatively proletarian Moscow. Here a total of 1930 members were involved in party work as well as some other duties, 5.4% of the total membership, of whom 34% were the full-time APWs. Once again these figures are higher in the party as a whole (20,148 or 9.4%) and in the party without the two capitals 16,175 or 10.3%, with the full-time APWs representing 36.2% and 37.1%, respectively, of these totals.<sup>176</sup>

An important concern of the 1920 reregistration was to discover the number of communists who had previously belonged to another party. In Moscow of those joining the party in 1918

176. Table 17, and Materialy po statistike, pp.42-7, 90-3.

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11.4% had previously belonged to another party.<sup>177</sup> By August 1920 2416 (8%) of the total of 29,822 communists in the city had once belonged to another party, and the same proportion in the whole MPO.<sup>178</sup> By March 1921 this had ostensibly fallen to 1523 (4.5%) in the whole MPO,<sup>179</sup> though the fall is almost certainly partially explained by members covering their past affiliations. Nevertheless, the trend was clear for one-time members of other parties as a group to decline as a proportion of the MPO during the civil war. Nevertheless, the fear that the party was being swamped by them was a major concern of the 1921 purge,<sup>180</sup> and reflects the increasing siege mentality of the party.

The 1920 reregistration illustrated once again that the party by the end of war communism had changed dramatically from that of 1917. One indicator is the decline in the number of those who had undergone some sort of persecution under the autocracy. By August 1920 only 3474 (11.6%) out of 29,820 in the city fell into this category, and in the guberniya only 316 (5.8%) out of 5406, giving a total of 3790 (10.7%) out of 35,226 in the joint MPO.<sup>181</sup> Moscow city had a higher proportion of people who had undergone some sort of repression than the party as a whole (8%) reflecting the concentration of dedicated

177. Vserossiiskaya perepis' chlenov RKP(b), 1922g. issue 4, M. 1923, p.47.

178. In the guberniya 305 (6%) out of 5406 had once belonged to another party giving a total of 2721 (8%) out of the total MPO membership of 35,226. In the 38 gubernii 14,190 (7%) out of 213,669 members are so categorised, Materialy po statistike, p.66.

179. Byulleten' MK RKP(b), 1, 8 April 1921, p.6.

180. Lenin PSS, vol.44, p.124.

181. Materialy po statistike, p.66.

revolutionaries. Despite this, the great majority of the Moscow party by the end of the civil war had not been seasoned by Tsarist repression. This was yet another factor reinforcing the division of the party into two groups.

Table 18

Age and sex structure of the MPO in August 1920

Age	City			Total			Joint MPO			Total		
	Men	%	Women	%		%	Men	%	Women	%		%
Up to 18	206	1	44	1	250	1	279	1	53	1	322	1
18-19	1731	7	316	8	2047	7	2022	6	386	8	2408	7
20-23	5802	22	1089	28	6891	23	6476	21	1260	28	7738	22
24-29	8829	34	1232	31	10061	34	10093	33	1413	31	11506	33
30-39	6818	26	839	21	7657	26	8450	28	962	21	9412	27
40 +	2168	9	301	8	2469	8	2968	10	349	8	3317	9
Not known	313	1	132	3	445	1	365	1	150	3	515	1
%	87		13		100		87		13		100	
TOTAL	25867	100	3953	100	29820	100	30653	100	4573	100	35226	100

Source: Materialy po statistike, pp.22-7.

The great preponderance of men over women in the organisation is marked. These figures represent the high point of female membership during the civil war, and thereafter the proportion fell. In Sokol'nicheskii raion, for example, by December 1920 the proportion of female communists had fallen to 8.7% from the 11% in September of that year.<sup>182</sup> The youth of the party is also marked: 63% of the joint organisation was under 30, and 90% under 40, with the single largest group in their late twenties. The rule that no party member was to be under 18 clearly was not observed.

Fewer female party members were married than men, but a

182. Otchet Sok. RK-ta, p.7.

Table 19

Marital status of MPO members in August 1920

	Men		Women		Total		% for
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	38 gubs
Single	14178	46	2657	58	16835	48	33
Married	15132	50	1644	36	16776	48	63
Not known	1343	4	272	6	1615	4	4
TOTAL	30653	100	4573	100	35226	100	100
With							
dependents	6253	20	1992	44	8245	23	19
Without							
dependents	24400	80	2581	56	26981	77	81

Source: Materialy po statistike, pp.8-9.

greater proportion had people dependent on them. A smaller proportion of people in Moscow were married than in the party as a whole. Men who were married were unlikely to have had children. Therefore for men marriage was not such a barrier to party membership as it was for women, but childlessness was an important factor in party membership. The very concept of the activist party member outlined by Lenin before the revolution militated against the active participation of women until adequate resources were devoted to freeing them from domestic toil.

From the preceding material we can draw up a composite picture of the typical communist in Moscow at the end of 1920. This communist was male, Russian (though there are no details on the national composition of the MPO), possibly married but without children, and in his late twenties. He had joined the party in 1919 or 1920, and had therefore not suffered repression for his political beliefs under the autocracy. His background was likely to have been manual work in industry, possibly in a metal plant, but now he would more than likely be working in some

office. It was unlikely that he would have been a member of another party before joining the Bolsheviks. To survive the periodic reregistrations he had to fulfil several duties, such as the subbotniks and communist detachments, and to attend party meetings. He had almost certainly undergone military training, and probably served at the front, but now with the peace his greatest fear was that he would be returned to the factories. It was this communist that the party had to control and organise, and how this was achieved we shall see in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### Organisation

An important feature of Leninism as it developed during the civil war was that theoretical positions were translated into organisational forms. As Georg Lukacs put it in a 1922 essay, written as he later admitted under the influence of the 'messianic utopianism' of the civil war, organisation was 'the form of mediation between theory and practice'.<sup>1</sup> Recruitment policy, as we have seen, provided the basis for the emergence of an 'old guard', but organisational practice tended to consolidate this group during the civil war. The X party congress resolution on party building admitted that the main 'contradiction' of the war period was rapid numerical growth balanced by the stifling of self-activity through 'extreme centralisation and the system of military orders'.<sup>2</sup> A small active group developed in the party, a bureaucracy, which dominated a passive group which was 'only occasionally brought into play and then only at the behest of the former'.<sup>3</sup>

The 'May programme' had called for a centralised, disciplined, and united party in which all party members were subordinate to the territorial committees. This chapter will look at how this programme was implemented during the civil war.

1. Georg Lukacs, 'Towards a Methodology of the Problem of Organisation', in History and Class Consciousness, Merlin Press, London 1971, p.299.

2. X s"ezd RKP, p.561.

3. Lukacs, p.319.

1. The Moscow committee (MK)

Up to May 1920, when it was united with the guberniya committee, the MK exercised the rights and functions of a guberniya party committee. In the first phase of Soviet power the MK existed more as a general political coordinating body than the organisational centre of party work in the city. From mid-1918 all party committees began to reorganise themselves, but these new model committees, as they were to become, differed in several respects from the old committees of 1917. They were recreated as part of a governing body and structured not for the struggle to achieve power, but for the exercise of that power over the soviets, trade unions, other social bodies, and their own membership. They were increasingly integrated into a general party structure superimposed on the state system. The party committees issued instructions for the acceptance of new members and printed party cards until this function was taken over by the TsK in late 1920. They drew up regulations for the governance of the local party organisation, and in general became the supreme political authority in a locality.

The Moscow party organisation illustrates the crystallisation of the party process. In the shadow of the TsK it was united by close personal and organisational links with the party centre. Nevertheless, the Moscow party and its committee developed both in interaction with the centre but more importantly in this period through the social and political traditions of the city itself. In 1920 the secretary of the MK, A.F. Myasnikov was still proud of the independent traditions of the city organisation:

The Moscow party organisation is unique in the Russian Communist Party, not like that of Petrograd or any other organisation...because of its specific features, the intake of workers and its strong traditions, whose reasons have to be sought in the composition of the Moscow proletariat and the structure of Moscow industry.

A major anomaly of the MPO was the practice of direct delegation to the MK from the raions and not by election at a city party conference. The first city conference on 3-4 April 1917 had elected a committee, but once the raion party organisations (RPO) had established themselves the role of the conference, beginning from the third city conference on 10 May 1917, was restricted to confirming the delegates from the raions to the MK. This system remained in operation, with various modifications, until May 1920. The RPOs had a variable number of representatives depending on their size, with one delegate for 250 party members.<sup>5</sup> Thus the railway RPO had between 2-5 on the MK throughout the period,<sup>6</sup> Basmannyi 4 representatives in February 1919,<sup>7</sup> and a large RPO such as Gorodskoi 8 in March 1920.<sup>8</sup> The raion representatives usually included members of the raion soviet EC.

Each raion elected its representatives to the MK at a raion party conference, the highest body in the raions in the early period, and later at a delegate party conference. The norms and periods of representation changed. In August 1919, for example, the MK bureau even decided 'Not to set a period of

4. KM, col.657.

5. Ustav Moskovskoi organizatsii RKP, M. 1918, pp.4-5.

6. Zheleznodorozhnik i revolyutsii, M. 1923, p.47.

7. P, 20 February 1919.

8. P, 26 March 1920.



authority for members, since the raions have the right to re-elect them at every delegate meeting'.<sup>9</sup> This flexible system is reflected in the lack of information on the membership of the MK between 1918 and March 1920 as delegates were recalled or sent to other work. The size of the MK varied between 30 and 40 members (Appendix 14).

This procedure allowed the RPOs to exert a direct influence over the MK. Direct representation and the right of recall suggests that within the MPO at least some of the elements of the commune state were being practiced. At the end of 1920 Myasnikov wrote that this system was not democratic centralism, but federalism, and indeed for the first part of the war the MPO consisted of allied but largely autonomous raion party organisations. Therefore, he argued, 'The MK did not lead the work of the raions either politically or organisationally'.<sup>10</sup> As we shall see, unification with the guberniya prompted a major debate on the role and manner of electing the MK.

Local party organisations were governed in their internal affairs by their own statutes, while their relationships with other bodies were established by the general party statutes adopted by the VI party congress in August 1917 and the new statute adopted by the VIII party conference in December 1919. The Moscow statute adopted by the 30 July 1918 city party conference reflected both the desire for a more ordered city organisation following the May circulars, and the attempt to

9. V.N. Tarusov, Iz istorii Moskovskoi partiinoi organizatsii, issue 2, Uchenye zapiski MGPI, issue 239, M. 1973, p.29.

10. KM, col.658.

enshrine the rights of the lower party organisations, above all the RPOs. The statute stated that the city party conference was to be elected by general raion party meetings and to meet monthly, and that it was the highest party body in the city. The MK delegated by the raions was 'To guide all the political and organisational work of all raion party organisations and all communist fractions of the various institutions in Moscow'.<sup>11</sup>

In practice, however, for most of the period it was in no position to exert significant supervision over the work of the raions for lack of its own apparatus and staff. In the early period of Soviet power the organisation of the party in the localities was marked by diversity and often by extreme informality. In many of the committees in Moscow, and especially in the raions, all offices were elected and circulated among the members. Posts were not strictly appointed and often no-one was responsible for carrying out any particular policy or job. At the end of 1918 the MK's own commissions, later called departments (organisation, agitation, soviet, military, and one for the TUs and the economy) were barely functioning.<sup>12</sup>

From the first because of its size the MK selected a bureau (variously called a presidium, executive committee or commission) to carry out current work, and initially consisted of about 5 people but by 1920-1 this had expanded to about 10 (Appendix 14). It prepared the agenda for MK meetings and also had the important right of distributing active party workers. On 26 July 1918 the

11. Ustav MPO 1918, pp.3-4.

12. KM, col.658.

MK decided to form a secretariat of three,<sup>13</sup> meeting about three times a week, that acted as the main motor of the MK. At that time the whole staff of the MK apparat consisted of between 16-20 people.<sup>14</sup> Zagorskii's role in the MK was equivalent to that of Sverdlov in the TSK in the early period, with membership statistics and personnel notes confined to what his own briefcase could carry.<sup>15</sup>

In February 1919, at a time of debate in the organisation over the effectiveness of the MK and its alleged lack of leadership, the work of the MK bureau was reorganised. The seven-person bureau and the RKs were now obliged to report on their activities to the full MK, which was to meet once a week apart from emergency meetings. The bureau was to select two assistants for the MK secretary who were to act as an organisation committee.<sup>16</sup> The March 1920 statute changed the status of the bureau from a purely technical body to one with decision-making powers between conferences.<sup>17</sup> On unification with the guberniya in May 1920 the bureau's independence was further enhanced as the stipulation that all of its work was to be discussed by the MK was dropped, and it now only had to report

13. Zagorskii, Breslav, and D.I. Efremov as first secretary (Dumova, p.93). With Efremov's departure for the front in September 1918 Zagorskii became first secretary, ibid., p.99.

14. Dumova, p.93

15. Dumova, p.93. Sverdlov and Zagorskii were old friends from Nizhni-Novgorod, and it was Sverdlov who called Zagorskii back to Moscow in mid-1918 even though the latter had had no contact with the MPO for four years.

16. Tarusov, p.25.

17. A.F. Myasnikov, Izbrannye proizvedeniya, Erevan 1965, p.260.

on the more important topics.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, there are no details on the size of the MK secretariat at the end of the war, but it was probably still not a very large organisation even if the clerical staff are included. It did, however, have at its disposal the 540 party members (Table 17) in the city who were devoted purely to party work.

While Moscow was no exception to the national phenomenon of guberniya and city committees being led by active party workers of pre-revolutionary vintage, this standing at 75% in late 1919,<sup>19</sup> the actual composition of the MK over the period was marked by a high degree of flux. Only one person (Zelenskii) elected to the first MK in May 1917 was elected to the one of February 1921, and only Belen'kii sat on every committee elected between September 1918 and early 1921 (Appendix 14). With the change to the election of the MK at a guberniya party conference in 1920 the stability of the MK membership markedly increased.

## 2. The raion party organisations (RPO)

As a consequence of the clandestine forms of party activity before February 1917 and the nature of the revolutionary struggle in 1917, a large degree of autonomy was vested in the raion party organisations. They were the final arbiters of membership in the raions, controlled the work of the cells, and were the scene of the debates over the most important political questions facing the party and the country.

Raion committees (RK) were initially elected at general

18. Ustav Moskovskoi organizatsii RKP(b), M. 1920, p.5

19. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 9, 20 December 1919.

meetings of the raion organisations, and from mid-1918 at delegate meetings. During the civil war there was a tendency for the RKs to decrease in size as personnel became scarcer and functions were centralised. At the end of July 1918, for instance, the Khamovnicheskii RK was re-elected and now had only 6 members instead of 19. The RK bureau was abolished and its functions were transferred to a secretariat.<sup>20</sup> A general meeting of Butyrskii RPO on 3 August 1918 even went so far as to propose giving the RK dictatorial powers.<sup>21</sup>

During the 'withering away of the party' period the RKs had barely functioned. In Gorodskoi raion, for example, up to August 1918 there had not been a single full-time party organiser. In that month a secretariat of three was formed.<sup>22</sup> Until mid-July 1918 Alekseevsko-Rostokinskii RK did not have a full-time activist, or even a permanent secretary,<sup>23</sup> and this was the case in most raions. With the onset of the war and the mass mobilisations which weakened the cells at the base of the party, party work became increasingly concentrated in the hands of the committees. A major response to the party crisis on the eve of the VIII party congress was to strengthen the party apparatus itself by ensuring a corps of people devoted to party work alone. The MK meeting of 11 January 1919 heard Zagorskii demand the strict enforcement of an earlier MK resolution on the return from the front of one responsible official for each raion.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless the chronic shortage of party workers continued.

20. P, 23 July 1918.

21. P, 15 August 1918.

22. P, 31 August 1918.

23. P, 18 July 1918.

24. P, 18 January 1919.

In February 1919 the Rogozhsko-Simonovskii RK complained that its greatest weakness was the lack of APWs. In the past two months alone, the RK stated, the raion had lost six of its leading members. The December 1918 mobilisation had ruptured the committee's links with many of the factories in the raion.<sup>25</sup>

Lefortovskii RK reported that after the same mobilisation work in the cells had collapsed because of the lack of organisers and instructors.<sup>26</sup> The lack of APWs was to be a central motif of party life during the civil war. The response, apart from strengthening the apparatus, included recruitment and training new members to ensure a flow of activists.

Despite the difficulties the party committees began to consolidate themselves. The Sokol'nicheskii RK report for July-November 1918 illustrates the improvement in party work. Functions had been specialised and particular bodies had been created to carry out specific duties, such as an agitprop department. In June 1918 the RK had occupied a single room and had only one secretary, with all the work being carried out by an RK of 11-13 people. By November 1918 the RK occupied a whole floor of a fairly large building, and instead of a single secretary there was a whole secretariat. Following the reregistration of mid-1918, mentioned above, membership towards the end of the year increased sharply, and the number of cells had increased from 20 in July to 45 in November, with over half of the enterprises in the raion having one.<sup>27</sup>

The revival in party organisation coincided with the war,

25. P, 2 February 1919.

26 P, 30 January 1919.

27. P, 12 December 1918.

which inevitably gave that revival a centralised flavour. The TsK circular of 4 February 1919 vividly described the connection between the departure of party members and the compensatory concentration of party life in the committees:

The organisational disintegration suffered by our party with the departure of the best forces to soviet work has now been replaced by the development of a strongly centralised party apparatus. We have marched a long way on this path, but the process is in no way to be considered completed.<sup>28</sup>

In Basmannyi raion, for instance, in the first period of the war work was rapidly concentrated in the hands of the RK bureau. The RK itself, elected in November 1918, had only met twice in plenary session by February 1919. A delegate meeting on 5-6 February 1919 even proposed abolishing the RK and concentrating work in the bureau, a clear breach of democratic centralism. Instead, the meeting decided to decrease the RK from 15 to 7 members, and this at its first meeting decided to abolish the bureau.<sup>29</sup>

Elsewhere work was also concentrated in the hands of a small group of raion activists. In Zamoskvorech'e, for example, the RK bureau was abolished in July 1919, and the work of the raion soviet was similarly concentrated.<sup>30</sup> In large raions such as Gorodskoi the RKs consisted of 15-20 people with current work carried out by a bureau of 3-5 elected by the RK.<sup>31</sup>

In each raion there was a revisional commission, initially established in 1917 and elected at a general meeting to oversee the financial affairs of the RPO.<sup>32</sup> Concern over the chronic

28. Partiya v period inostrannoï voennoi interventsii, p.74.

29. P, 20 February 1919.

30. VIMS, 1 August 1919.

31. P, 8 July 1919.

32. P, 11 January 1919.

organisational fluidity in the raions prompted an extension of their functions, codified by an MK instruction of 7 June 1919. This established that they were to be composed of three MK members, and their duties included supervising the activities of the RKs, their organisations, and the state of the party in the raions.<sup>33</sup> They were therefore the precursors of the Control Commissions established by the IX party conference, and before then they acted as a check on the RKs.

The lack of personnel and the organisational heterogeneity in the raions had prompted several plans to unite the raions in 1919.<sup>34</sup> The proposals had been shelved in the heat of the war, but with the breathing space of early 1920 the 13 raions were reduced to 7 in March of that year.<sup>35</sup> The MK justified the move both on the grounds that it would save on personnel, and that it would facilitate the fulfilment of orders from the centre.<sup>36</sup>

The July 1918 MPO statute had stated that the highest body in the raions was the general meeting which could elect an RK of whatever size it felt necessary.<sup>37</sup> It provided little indication

33. P, 17 June 1919.

34. P, 17 June, 11 July 1919.

35. Butyrskii raion was united with Sushchevsko-Mar'inskii and Presnenskii raions to form a massive new raion called Krasnopresnenskii covering a third of Moscow ; Alekseevo-Rostokinskii was joined with Sokol'nicheskii and the new raion was known by the latter's name; and Basmannyi was merged with Blagushe-Lefortovo to form Baumanskii raion.

36. KT, 18 March 1920. The new RKs had the following standard departments: general; accounting and statistics; organisation and agitation; female workers; Komsomol; subbotniks; and military (KT, 23 May 1920). By early 1921 the number of departments had been reduced to five: general; accounts and statistics; women; organisation and agitation; and subbotniks, Ocherki ist MO KPSS, vol.2, p.212.

37. Ustav MPO 1918, p.6.



of the relationships in the RPOs between the various bodies. In early December 1918 the Sokol'nicheskii RPO, the most lively organisation at the time, adopted a reglament (standing orders). It attempted to give a more precise definition of the functions of the cells; the delegate meetings, which were now elevated as the highest body in the raions for organisational questions; the general meetings, which were to deal now with political questions only; and the RK, with a bureau to conduct current work.<sup>38</sup> This reglament was adopted by the MK on 25 December 1918<sup>39</sup> and was generalised with the force of a party statute for the whole organisation by the city conference on 18 January 1919.<sup>40</sup>

The adoption of this reglament registered the centrality of the RPOs in the Moscow organisation. Party work in the raions was focused on the delegate meetings, and the MK, in its party building resolution of 15 February 1919 on the eve of the VIII congress, argued that this would develop the 'self-activity and collective creativity' of the party and its members. The MK insisted that this was of universal application to all urban party organisations.<sup>41</sup> While party work was being concentrated in the raions, no corresponding movement was yet taking place between the RPOs and the MK. In this sense Myasnikov in late 1920 was justified in stating that both the reglament and the 1918 statute reflected a 'lack of centralism or ordered system'.<sup>42</sup>

38. P, 12 December 1918.

39. P, 11 January 1919.

40. P, 1 February 1919.

41. P, 19 February 1919.

42. KM, col.658.

Nevertheless, important organisational principles were being established which defined the operation of democratic centralism within the ruling party. For instance, in January 1919 the MK severely censured the practice of holding private inter-raion meetings of party members without seeking the permission of either the RKs or the MK. It declared that such meetings infringed the statute and that their organisers would be strictly reprimanded.<sup>43</sup> Meetings of party members for whatever purpose could only take place within the given structures, and it was over this principle that the later oppositions stumbled. At the same time it ensured that the 'self-activity' of party members was channelled to further the objectives set by higher party bodies.

### 3. Reform proposals

On the eve of the VIII party congress a wide debate developed over the 'crisis' in the party. Against the background of fears over the quality of recruitment and the development of a group of verkhi dominating the nizy, discussed in chapter 4, the problem of the nature and level of guidance to be obtained from the TsK and MK over lower party bodies was raised. At issue was the question of how to establish effective central leadership without undermining local authority. The debate focused on the party's relationship with the soviets and will therefore be discussed in that context (Chapter 8), and for now we will restrict ourselves to internal party questions alone.

Three main positions emerged in the pre-congress discussion.

43. P, 18 January 1919.

The first is represented by those whom Service calls the 'Strict Centralists',<sup>44</sup> otherwise called by Helgesen the apparatchiki,<sup>45</sup> whose views were articulated by Sverdlov in the TsK and whose main strength was concentrated in the Nizhni-Novgorod party organisation around Sergushev and Lazar Kaganovich. The latter called for a 'sleek hierarchy of uniformly organised party committees',<sup>46</sup> working under the guidance of an improved central party apparatus.<sup>47</sup> At the other extreme were a group based in Moscow guberniya known as the Democratic Centralists (DCs). The DCs, joined by E.N. Ignatov and other representatives of Moscow's raions, agreed with the 'strict' group that the TsK displayed 'extreme inertia' and a lack of 'planned leadership' and provided insufficient detailed guidance for the local party organisations, but as opposed to the other group stressed the need for democracy and accountability.<sup>48</sup> In the run-up to the conference, therefore, an unholy alliance formed between these two groups in criticising the party centre.<sup>49</sup>

The third view was represented by the traditionally moderate MK. The manner of its formation as a body of delegates from the

44. Service, p.108.

45. Helgesen, p.312.

46. Service, p.106.

47. One of the victories to the credit of the centralisers was the abolition of the Moscow Oblast Committee (Bureau) on 22 January 1919. Together with the other oblast organisations it represented an intermediary aggregation between the TsK and the guberniya committees. Its functions largely duplicated those of the TsK and the local committees, and with the consolidation of both it was deemed no longer necessary.

48. Resolution passed by 2 March 1919 Moscow guberniya party conference, P, 5 March 1919.

49. Helgesen, p.313.

raions in itself retarded the development of an apparatchik mentality. In its 15 February 1919 resolution on the VIII congress the MK claimed to steer a course mid-way between separatism, on the one hand, and 'bureaucratic centralism', on the other. The now customary calls for strict party discipline over all members irrespective of their posts, and over soviet fractions in particular, were balanced by a range of proposals aimed at drawing in new party workers by increasing the importance of the delegate meetings, for party conferences to be held every few months, more guidance from the centre through circulars, and an improvement in the effectiveness of the centre by forming a three-man secretariat (in the event formed only in April 1920).<sup>50</sup> At the congress the MK's moderate line on the question of party changes was the dominant one. Zinoviev's keynote speech on the topic promised enough to both extremes to satisfy neither but conceded too little to anger the moderates.<sup>51</sup>

Following the VIII congress little attention was paid to organisational reform as the pressing needs of the front and current campaigns took priority. The Blagushe-Lefortovo RK report for May 1919, for example, admitted that at not one of the 4 RK and 2 bureau sessions that month had general organisational work, or even the general state of the party in the raion, been discussed. It accused the MK and the city party conferences of a similar omission.<sup>52</sup> The accusation was justified. For the larger part of 1919 party work developed in response to immediate needs and the available resources. Awareness of the ramshackle

50. P, 19 February 1919. 51. VIII s"ezd RKP, pp.284-7.

52. P, 11 July 1919; Perepiska, vol.VIII, pp.369-70.

condition of the organisation, however, in July 1919 prompted a review of all aspects of the work of the MPO from the MK's own departments to the raion organisations and a plan was drawn up recommending a thorough reform. Pressure of current work prevented the implementation of the plan at the time.<sup>53</sup>

With the breathing space of early 1920 the MK convened an inter-raion conference of RK representatives on 9 January to discuss the reform of the MPO on the basis of the earlier plan. Myasnikov presented the main report and launched a scathing attack on all aspects of the party organisation: there was no single model or system in the work of the party committees; delegate and general meeting did not everywhere meet uniformly, and in some places did not meet at all; the Komsomol organisation 'dragged out a miserable existence'; the party schools were 'moribund'; party statistics and files were inadequate; there were too many plants without cells; and the soviets had to be revived.<sup>54</sup> Myasnikov's speech not so much revealed the poor condition of the organisation, though this it did vividly enough, but portrayed the vision of the future organisation.

The discussion, to Myasnikov's stated displeasure, centred on the MK's own inadequacies. One speaker called for greater guidance of the MK over the raions; another for the MK to be elected at a city conference; yet another criticised the tendency of the bureau to take on the functions of the full MK, and so on. Belen'kii, the representative of Presnenskii RK and MK member, argued that electing the MK at a conference would isolate the MK

53. P, 11 January 1920; KM, col.666.

54. KM, cols.666-7.

from the raions, while Myasnikov, who was later to change his mind on the question, argued that the existing method of constituting the MK was 'the most democratic and allows the committee to be closely linked to the raions'.<sup>55</sup> A commission was appointed to draft a plan on the basis of the discussion at the meeting, and its recommendations were adopted by the MK on 21 January 1920. A new statute was to be drafted to incorporate the reform proposals, the raions were to be united and divided into wards (uchastki), a reorganisation of the MK secretariat was envisaged, and enhanced party control over Komsomol and the trade unions was planned.<sup>56</sup> The conference shows that calls for greater central guidance, voiced before the VIII party congress and now, must be understood in the context in which they were made. They represented not so much a demand for greater centralisation as for the greater efficiency of the existing system. The calls for a delineation of functions, with the powers and responsibilities of the MK clearly established, was a way of preventing central encroachments of local prerogatives and arbitrary administrative actions.

The new draft statute was adopted by the city party conference on 18 March 1920, and it superseded the July 1918 statute and the December 1918 reglament. The new statute enhanced the role of the city party conference by insisting that it was the highest juridical and guiding body in the MPO. Hitherto, according to Myasnikov, it had been a 'ceremonial' body with large numbers from the raions and the centre attending to hear

55. P, 13 January 1920; KM, col.667.

56. P, 28 January 1920; KM, col.668.

'fancy reports' and 'triumphal voting'.<sup>57</sup> The statute continued the system of raion delegation to the MK, though a definite term was set (6 months). Now the city conference was not only to confirm the MK members but the MK was made responsible to it, whereas previously only the individual MK member was responsible to his raion. Nevertheless, the manner of forming the MK, despite the changes, still contravened articles 33-4 of the party statute adopted by the VIII party conference, stating that the conference elects the committee.<sup>58</sup>

The role of the delegate meetings in the raions was enhanced and their decisions were obligatory on the RK, which they elected. They did however, lose the deciding role in the acceptance and expulsion of members which was transferred to the RK. Delegate meetings were to restrict the size of RKs to 5-7 members.<sup>59</sup> The general meetings were downgraded and they were no longer even in principle the highest body in the raion, and instead were only to hear reports meeting once every three months<sup>60</sup> and play a passive role. At the same time the city was divided into about 50 wards (uchastki) based on production and territorial principles, each with about 15-20 cells and headed by a responsible organiser who formed a ward bureau of himself and two local representatives. The aim of the ward organisations was to increase member participation in party life, and to make the

57. Myasnikov, Izb. proiz., p.258.

58. KPSS v rez. i resh., pp.130-1.

59. KT, 21 March 1920. In fact the raions ignored this. A delegate meeting of Sokol'nicheskii raion in mid-May, for example, elected a new RK of 15 members, KT, 15 May 1920.

60. VIMS, 11 March 1920.

party more responsive to local needs.<sup>61</sup> After heated debate the conference accepted the basic provisions of the draft and the final wording was left to a commission of six.<sup>62</sup> This statute was the last to reflect the opinion of the city alone, and it was substantially altered on unification with the guberniya.

#### 4. The creation of a single guberniya organisation

At the VIII party conference in December 1919 Kaganovich, one of the 'strict' centralists, had called for the abolition of autonomous city committees (though excluded those in the capitals) in favour of a uniform system of guberniya party committees.<sup>63</sup> In Moscow the idea of unification had been raised by the gubkom in August 1919 but had been rejected by the MK on 28 August on various specious grounds, and it argued that unification was unlikely to lead to a saving of personnel. It was agreed, however, that the two committees would enter into closer cooperation, including mutual representation.<sup>64</sup> Clearly the city was trying to maintain its independence.

With economic tasks becoming the priority in early 1920 and the intensified pressure for standardised party organisations the question of unification was once again raised. At the IX party congress Kamenev now called for a uniform structure of gubkomy and departments.<sup>65</sup> The TsK in March 1920 issued instructions on the standardised gubkomy: each was to be headed by a secretariat and a secretary; and the secretariat was to have three basic

61. KT, 18 March 1920.

62. KT, 20 March 1920.

63. VIII konf. RKP, p.152.

64. P, 2 September 1919.

65. IX s"ezd RKP, p.309.



departments (organisation and instruction; accounts, information and statistics; and special sections for work in the countryside, women, and nationalities).<sup>66</sup>

Moscow was now forced to adapt to this model. On 21 April 1920 the MK agreed to the unification of the two regions and a commission was assigned to draw up a plan.<sup>67</sup> The 15 May 1920 city party conference, the last to be held until the revival of the city organisation in February 1931, adopted the plan for unification. The first joint guberniya party conference on 21 May, with 285 delegates from the city and 70 from the guberniya, formally agreed to the unification.<sup>68</sup> Among the reasons given at the conference for the measure was the argument that it would save on personnel, reduce duplication, increase party influence in the countryside by employing the greater resources of the city, and as the gubispolkom (guberniya soviet EC) had noted earlier, it would make it easier to implement the policies of the centre.<sup>69</sup>

66. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 14, 1920

67. KT, 24 April 1920. The commission consisted of representatives of the MK, Moscow soviet, MGSPS, MGK, and the gubispolkom.

69. P, 23 May 1920.

69. KT, 25 April; 22 May 1920. The joint MPO now consisted of 45,000 members according to figures given at the conference, distributed among 26 organisations: 7 raion organisations in the city and 19 uezd organisations (KM, col.674). Following unification the MK (still known by that name but now covering the guberniya as well) consisted of 8 departments: general; organisation and instruction; agitprop; military; countryside; women; subbotniks; and national minorities (P, 23 May 1920). Further standardisation in gubkom structure was pressed by the TsK in 1920-1: in September 1920 an all-Russian conference of gubkom secretaries, chaired by TsK secretary Preobrazhenskii, called for the abolition of certain departments (countryside, military and subbotniks), and insisted that gubkomy were to be

Unification once again posed the controversial question of constituting the MK. The MK bureau meeting of 18 May 1920 decided that the existing MK and MGK would draw up a list of 31 candidates to be elected by the joint conference (which duly took place) with current work carried out by a bureau of 7.<sup>70</sup> At a stroke direct raion control over the MK was abolished, and the change marked an important step in the development in the MPO of greater MK control and intensified integration into the national party organisation.

The changes were marked by the adoption of a new statute governing the joint organisation. The guberniya conference became the highest body in the region, meeting every six months and electing the MK. The delegate meetings in the raions were confirmed as the highest local body, but were now to meet only once every three months to hear reports and elect the RK.<sup>71</sup> The statute loosened direct membership control over the party's executive bodies, and the rights of discussion of rank and file party members were limited. The statute stressed, for example, that the delegate meetings could only discuss political or

elected by conferences, to have a secretary and not a chairman, and so on (Izvestiya TsK RKP, 24, 12 October 1920, pp.5-7; IX konf. RKP, pp.331-7). A TsK circular of November 1920 called for further standardisation (Izvestiya TsK RKP, 25, 1920, pp.3-6). In early 1921 the TsK recommended that there should only be three departments: organisation and instruction; general; agitprop, Izvestiya TsK RKP, 27, 1921, pp.1-4. By early 1921 the MK had five departments (agitation, with 6 sub-departments including national minorities; general; organisation and instruction, with 4 sub-departments; female workers; and subbotniks, Ocherki ist. MO KPSS, vol. 2, p.212.

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70. KT, 20 May 1920.

71. Ustav MPO 1920, pp.1-7.

organisational questions with the permission of the RK.<sup>72</sup> The statute marked the apogee of centralisation in the MPO during the civil war. With the development of a wide debate over party democracy at the end of 1920-early 1921 (Part III) an amendment was introduced at the V Moscow guberniya conference (19-21 February 1921) dropping the stipulation that delegate meetings could only discuss questions of principle with the agreement of RK, and stated that they were to meet every month.<sup>73</sup>

The new model MK now had direct responsibility for the work of the whole MPO, and of the soviets, trade unions, and other social organisations through the party fractions.<sup>74</sup> Myasnikov commented on this at the end of 1920:

If previously the highest practical organ of the Moscow organisation, the bureau... had only been a 'staff between raions' it now became a real general headquarters of the MPO. The MK itself, <sup>75</sup>from a 'high gathering' became a controlling centre.

The old federative principle had been replaced by strong democratic centralism with the complete subordination of lower party units to higher ones up to the MK and beyond. This was a

72. Ustav MPO 1920, p.6.

73. V Mosk. gubpartkonf. pp.40-1. This resolution was followed by a campaign for re-elections of the delegates which continued into March 1921, KT, 15, 20 March 1921.

74. Ustav MPO 1920, p.4.

75. KM, col.668. An indication of the changing role of the MK can be gained by comparing its meetings in 1918 and 1920. Out of the 20 sessions of the MK between 13 November 1917 and 20 April 1918 specifically party questions were only ninth place in the amount of time devoted to them. Only one session (10 March 1918) discussed the state of the party in any depth (Popov, p.72). By comparison, in September 1920 the MK met in full session 4 times, and the bureau met 7 times at which 171 questions were discussed: 120 (70%) of an organisational character, 22 party, 16 soviet, and 13 other questions, Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.4.

crucial step in the 'internal metamorphosis' of the MPO as the RPOs became integrated into a hierarchical structure and thus lost the independence of the 'federalist' period. And, it should be noted, this was a response not to the war but to what appeared at the time as peace. The price of the increased bureaucratisation, in the sense of professionalisation, of the MPO was the emergence of an apparatus which brought the formally democratic procedures in the organisation under its own control, and therefore largely freed itself of the control of the rank and file membership. The organisation became more efficient, but it lost its participatory character. However, before the new system was accepted the MPO had to undergo a bitter period of discussion as the centralisers and reformers clashed in the party and trade union debates.

## 5. The party cells

### a. Number

Throughout the civil war the party committees insisted with varying success that all party members were to belong to a cell. The statute adopted by the VI party congress had defined that the basic unit uniting party members were the raion and oblast groupings, and in 1917 the cell was eclipsed by the general meeting of communists of a given raion or ward as the key organisational unit. With the decline in the activity of the party and the absorption of members in office jobs in the first half of 1918 many cells in enterprises and institutions simply dissolved. The communist's links with the party, insofar as it existed, was through a party fraction or the general meeting. As in so many other respects, it was the May 1918 TsK initiatives

which signalled a resurgence in the significance of the cells, and by the end of the war it was the cell that had in principle become the basic link for party members.

Over the whole period of the civil war the number of cells in the city doubled: from 563 in March 1918 to 934 in March 1920,<sup>76</sup> then falling to 909 in September of that year owing to the reregistration,<sup>77</sup> and thereafter a slight increase to 1035 cells in March 1921.<sup>78</sup> The lowest point in the number of cells came in the summer and autumn of 1918.

The 1920 reregistration for the first time gave detailed figures on the type and distribution of cells in six out of the seven raions:

Table 20

Type and distribution of cells in August 1920

	Factory		Transport		Military		Office		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Baum	127	76.0	0	-	30	18.3	7	4.3	164
Gor	14	6.3	5	2.2	69	31.1	134	60.4	222
K-P	35	30.4	12	10.4	18	15.6	50	43.5	115
R-S	40	59.7	7	10.4	18	26.9	2	3.0	67
Sok	15	11.4	52	39.7	35	26.7	29	22.1	131
Kham	8	10.4	20	30.0	29	37.7	20	30.0	77
TOTAL	239	30.8	96	12.4	199	25.6	242	31.2	776

Source: Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.9. There were also 133 cells in Zamoskvorech'e.

The concentration of communists in the army was reflected in the large number of military cells. Throughout the civil war cells

76. KT, 25 April 1920; KM, cols.669-70.

77. Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.9. At that time there were 349 cells in the guberniya.

78. Moskovskaya gorodskaya, pp.148-9. There were 581 cells in the guberniya.

in army units and rear military establishments comprised about a quarter of the total, with 102 cells by the end of 1918, 135 in June 1919, 221 in January 1920, 291 in August, and a peak of 311 in September before falling to 199 in October 1920.<sup>79</sup> During the war priority was given to staffing the army and the state with cadres, and this inevitably weakened the party's base in the factories. In September 1920, as mentioned, less than a third of the cells were in factories, and less than half of the active census enterprises had one. At this time the party layer in the industrial working class was only 7%.

The party organisations in even the largest plants numbered at most a few dozen members. In the Bogatyr' resin plant in Sokol'nicheskii raion, for example, which employed 5300 and was dominated by the Mensheviks, the cell was only founded in late 1918 and by January 1919 had only 26 members and 1 sympathiser.<sup>80</sup> In the 'Russkabel'' cable and metal plant the party cell only represented a miniscule proportion of the workforce, with only 20 members out of 2015 workers in 1917, 8 out of 900 in 1918, 5 out of 435 in 1919, 9 out of 345 in 1920, and 15 out of 580 workers in 1921.<sup>81</sup> In mid-1921 the average worker cell had 14-15 members, whereas the average in a soviet office had 60.<sup>82</sup> The cells in the factories were the first reserve of recruitment to the army

79. Otchet voennogo otdela, p.13, with the last figure from Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.9.

80. P, 5 January 1919.

81. Shest' let na revolyutsionnom puti. K yubileyu zavodskikh organizatsii 1917-23gg. Gos. russo-kabel'nyi i metalloprokatnyi zavod 'Russkabel', M. 1923, pp.13, 19.

82. KT, 4 November 1921.

and for other tasks. In the second half of 1918, for example, certain cells in the railway raion donated all their members to take up responsible posts elsewhere, the majority gave 40-70%, and many cells were disbanded altogether.<sup>83</sup> Whenever a military or other mobilisation was announced by the TSK, the MK would be informed how many communists were required from the MPO, a quota would then be set for each RK, which in turn would demand a certain number of communists from each cell. For example, in November 1919 an urgent order came from the MK to Basmanny RK to mobilise 42 for the fuel front. On 19 November the RK allotted this throughout the raion's cells: Mostyazhart 6, the gas plant 2, Mars 3, and so on.<sup>84</sup>

Table 21 reveals the enormous toll of the various 1918 mobilisations. Later, military mobilisations were kept to a minimum because of the plant's defence work, but still it was only in 1921 that the party cell was able to expand. In other enterprises where the work was unskilled or was not directly involved in production for the front the chances of a communist being drafted were very high. In the main military stores, for example, a cell was only founded in late 1919 with 4 members, which increased to 16 in early 1920 out of a workforce of 718. Despite the cells' smallness 6 of its members were sent to the Polish and Wrangel fronts, 2 of whom died.<sup>85</sup>

The constant drain on the cells not only weakened them numerically but also in their effectiveness. A delegate meeting

83. P, 1 December 1918.

84. Manievich, p.172.

85. Pyat' let raboty - yacheika RKP(b) i mestkoma Glavkhozsklada RKKA, 1919-1924gg., M. 1925, p.14.

Table 21

The communist cell in the Military Artillery (V. art.) plant,  
1917-1921 (Krasnopresnenskii raion)

	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921
No. of workers and employees .....	3746	2500	1400	786	476
No. of communists .....	230	350	71	58	75
No. of symps. & cand. ...	150	200	50	4	1
No. of communists sent to:					
- Moscow soviet .....	2	2	2	2	1
- Raion soviet .....	6	18	24	6	1
- Raion дума .....	8	-	-	-	-
- Fronts post-Oct.1917 .	72	115	16	5	1
- Other party orgs. ....	5	4	4	5	3
No. of comms & cand. sent:					
- On supply detachments.	-	90	20	7	-
- To social orgs. ....	24	9	7	5	5
Total comms & cand. sent .	117	238	73	30	15
No. of Mensheviks .....	70	15	-	-	-
No. of SRs .....	30	-	-	-	-

Source: S. Chernomordik (ed), *Oktyabr'skie dni v Moskve i  
raionnakh po vospominaniyam uchastnikov*, M. 1922, p.107.

in Blagushe-Lefortovo on 14 May 1919 discussed the miserable condition of the cells. They had all become much smaller with the mass of their membership on assignments or in the army, they met infrequently, and were mainly concerned, it was reported, with minor issues.<sup>86</sup> A questionnaire sent out by the RK in June 1919 revealed the following of the 22 cells in the raion (16 were in factories, 5 in institutions, and 1 in the army).<sup>87</sup> Their total membership was 92 with 214 sympathisers out of 3735 workers in the raion. The majority of the cells had been formed in 1918 (14), 7 in 1919, and 1 in 1917. In answer to the question of whether the cell enjoyed any prestige and authority 5 gave a

86. P, 21 May 1919.

87. Manievich, p.170.



definite negative answer, the majority were doubtful, and only a handful gave a positive answer. To the question of whether the workers where the cell was based were interested in meetings, all the cells answered in the affirmative, but added that the workers were almost exclusively interested in 'economic or selfish issues'. The report noted that the cells 'were completely failing to encompass new layers of the proletariat', and blamed the general circumstances and poor organisational work.<sup>88</sup>

In Khamovnicheskii raion on 10 May 1919 out of the 45 cells in the raion only 5 were in factories, and the rest were in offices or the army. Between February and May 1919 not a single new cell had been formed. According to the RK the large plants in the raion, dominated by the textile industry, had largely closed, and so 'the industrial proletariat has largely disappeared'. The party organisation was faced with the remnants of the proletariat in half-closed factories, and a mass of employees and craftworkers in smaller enterprises and workshops.<sup>89</sup>

A report from the enterprises in Rogozhsko-Simonovskii raion to a delegate meeting on 3 September 1919 confirmed the listless state of the party. The number of communists in the major plant, Guzhon, decreased from 75 in October 1917 (2.5% of the workforce of over 3000) to 51 (4.6% out of 460 workers) in March 1921<sup>90</sup>, and it was probably less at this time. The meeting insisted that the cells were to meet weekly with all party members obliged to attend. The party school in the raion had

88. P, 11 July 1919.

89. P, 29 May 1919.

90. Appendix 13, TsGAOR, 7952/3/209/186.

collapsed, and even the raion's representative on the MK had been assigned to work in Siberia.<sup>91</sup> By early 1921 in the Guzhon ward there were only 301 communists and 72 candidates in the 17 enterprises with 6000 workers and employees, 8000 in the army (mostly peasants), and 2500 railway workers, a membership total of 1.8% out of 16,500 people.<sup>92</sup>

By April 1919 in the proletarian Basmannyi raion there were 1212 party members and 201 sympathisers in 42 cells, 26 of which were in factories, 12 in the army, and 4 in offices.<sup>93</sup> By July 1919 numbers had risen to 1375 and 453, respectively, 50% of whom were workers and 25% apiece in offices and the army, distributed in 53 cells: 29 in factories, 14 in offices and 10 in the army.<sup>94</sup> Even here the greatest increase had taken place in the office and army cells, and this continued despite the party week. By April 1920 out of 81 cells only 32 were in enterprises, whose number had barely increased, while the number of army cells had increased to 25, soviet ones to 17, with 5 in the militia and 2 in colleges. Cells of 2-3 members in the factories were not rare.<sup>95</sup> On unification with Blagushe-Lefortovo the factory cells became the majority (Table 20).

The Gorodskoi RPO illustrates the way that office workers became the single largest group in the MPO. In this raion were concentrated the government offices, and it had few large enterprises and a mass of small workshops with 25-100 workers, leading reportedly to 'no clear class consciousness'.<sup>96</sup> The

91. P, 7 September 1919.

92. KT, 5 February 1921.

93. P, 20 May 1919.

94. P, 17 July 1919.

95. Manievich, p.167.

96. P, 7 July 1918.

organisation was the largest in the city, with 1017 members in May 1918,<sup>97</sup> rising to 5085 in September 1920.<sup>98</sup> As early as mid-1918 the majority of these were not workers, and many were not even from Moscow, reflecting the raion's preoccupation with administration.<sup>99</sup> In July 1919 75% of the membership were 'chinovniki' in the various offices. The number of cells had increased from 40 in October 1918 to 195 at that time, of which 128 (66%) were in offices, and only 28 in factories, 24 in the army, and 15 in TU offices.<sup>100</sup> By May 1920 11 (54%) of the 211 cells were in offices and only 34 in factories (with 62 in the army),<sup>101</sup> in September 1920 134 (60%) out of 222 (Table 20), and in September 1921 176 (70%) out of 250.<sup>102</sup>

Throughout the civil war the TsK and the MK had called for the formation of cells in enterprises, but the very pressure of the war hindered these attempts. By January 1921 only 21 out of the 140 cells in Sokol'nicheskii raion were in the 68 enterprises, leaving 47 without a cell.<sup>103</sup> With the approach of peace increased efforts were made to redistribute communists from offices to the factories, though by March 1921 little had been achieved to this end in Moscow. The priority at first was to strengthen the cells in the 'shock' factories, which tended to weaken the cells in other enterprises. At the same time the TsK in September 1920 relieved party members employed in metal plants

97. P, 16 July 1918.

98. KM, col.676.

99. P, 25 July 1918.

100. P, 8 July 1919.

101. KT, 5 May 1920.

102. Otchet MK za iyul', avgust i sentyabr' 1921g., p.22.

103. Otchet Sok. RK-ta, P.7.

from further mobilisations.<sup>104</sup> This may well have been a response to the increasing strike wave in these plants. At the same time more party activists were freed of all other duties and assigned (prikreplenie) to cells and wards.<sup>105</sup> The X party congress once again called for the transfer of communists from offices to plants, but as Zelenskii admitted at the XI congress a year later, the attempt to strengthen the party base in this way had proved a failure.<sup>106</sup>

The party's weakness in the factories and its isolation from the great mass of the workers was one of the major contributory factors to the disturbances from late 1920. During the civil war the party's base in the factories had been undermined, and when once again it was recreated it was no longer an organic growth from the factory itself but a directed process from the centre to the locality. Inevitably this affected the working of the cell, its role, and its relationship to the workforce.

b. Role and organisation of cells

The extent to which the civilian cell and its activists could be involved in the management of an enterprise or institution remained a controversial question throughout the war. Before nationalisation the cell, often in conjunction with the Bolshevik factory committees, were encouraged to play an active

104 Izvestiya TsK RKP, 22, 18 September 1920, pp.23-4.

105. KT, 17 November 1920.

106. XI s"ezd RKP, pp.444-5. There are no statistics for the civil war period in Moscow on the employment of communists in specific industries, or even for the number of cells in the various branches of industry.

role in the plants, but with the introduction of general state management their role became much more problematic. As at the beginning of the five-year plans, initial cell involvement in a high degree of supervision over management gradually gave way to a more restricted definition of their functions. Increasingly they were limited to the organisation and training of party members, providing information on local affairs to higher bodies, and conducting the ideological and organisational struggle against non-Bolshevik forces. The cells were given a variety of responsibilities but no real power. The change illustrates how in practice the transition took place from concepts of the commune state, as discussed above, to the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Both the working class and the party activists in the factories were separated from the direct management of industrial affairs.

The restricted definition of the role of the cells only slowly emerged. The July 1918 statute had only briefly mentioned the cells to state that they were to meet not less than once a week, and that the RK was to call weekly meetings (soveshchanie) with cell representatives.<sup>107</sup> The main focus of party life in the raions was, as we have seen, the general meeting and the RK.

The first major statement of the role of the cells in Moscow following nationalisation was made by the MK, meeting with the leading managers in nationalised industry, on 16 August 1918. The MK passed a resolution stating that every decision of responsible leaders of nationalised enterprises or soviet offices was to be strictly regulated and limited by the directives of

107. Ustav MPO 1918, pp.6-7.

the party cell and taken with its agreement. The managers were to give a report of their work to the weekly cell meeting, and hence the cell was to be an integral part of collegiate management.<sup>108</sup> In other words, the 'specialists' were to be kept under strict party control by the communist factory workers themselves, a view which veered towards the 'party' syndicalist.

By all accounts this resolution encountered a hostile reception and gave rise to a mass of conflicts. Its provisions concerning the institutions were reversed by the MK in a resolution of 2 October 1918 which stated, inter alia:

The [communist] fraction of commissariat employees does not have the right to interfere in the directives of the people's commissariats and their collegia. They do not have the right to demand reports from the latter. They only conduct party work among the commissariat employees and ensure<sup>109</sup> the correct course of work within the commissariats.

It was at this time that a city commissariat fraction bureau (Chapter 8) was abolished. While the tide had turned against the fractions (cells) in the offices, the time was still not ripe to begin the offensive against them in the factories. A report from Lefortovo raion at the end of 1918 even went so far as to applaud the cells for taking over the management of the factories and considered it a healthy sign of cell activity.<sup>110</sup> The December 1918 reglament once again only briefly mentioned the cells to state that they were to be formed wherever there were three or more communists.<sup>111</sup>

The endemic conflicts between the factory committees (mestkomy) and factory managements have been mentioned, and since

108. P, 20 August 1918.

109. P, 5 November 1918.

110. P, 4 December 1918.

111. P, 11 January 1919.

the majority of the committees were composed of communists, the cells were inevitably involved in these disputes. Where the factory committees were not composed of communists, as in the notable examples of the Bogatyr' and Guzhon plants, the communist cells were placed in a difficult position. In many cases the cells and the factory committees merged. A report from Khamovnicheskii raion in early 1919 argued that the cells were mainly concerned with local affairs and were gradually taking on the functions designated to the trade unions, such as trying to regulate conditions. Hence, the report went on, the general political level of the cells was low as participation in the day to day affairs of the plants inhibited the general propagandist and political functions of the party.<sup>112</sup>

The more active cells hoped to play in the civilian sphere an equivalent role to that attempted by the army cells, described by Sokol'nikov at the VIII congress as 'party syndicalism'.<sup>113</sup> And as in the army the cell's functions began to be limited, and hence an important stage in undermining the initiative of the rank and file party member was reached. An MK instruction of March 1919 issued guidelines on the cell's role and insisted that they were primarily to conduct party work, while the soviet collegia and factory boards were to run their respective organisations. The cell's supervisory functions, however, were not altogether denied, as they had not been in the 2 October 1918 MK motion on the commissariat fractions. The cell was to be kept informed and was to participate in the more important decision-making.

112. P, 8 February 1919.

113. VIII s"ezd RKP, p.148.

Disputes were to be taken to the corresponding party centre.<sup>114</sup> The cell therefore had no absolute rights over the factory management, and the role of the party member in the factories was undermined as final responsibility was transferred to higher party bodies outside the factory.

By mid-1919 the position had become clearer. An article in Pravda insisted that the cells were 'not to stand before workers as part of the administrative body' but were to restrict themselves to a supervisory role, though what this was to mean in practice was not defined. Above all, they were to conduct agitprop among the worker nizy who, the article stated, were far from being influenced by the party.<sup>115</sup> In the same issue Bukharin insisted that the cells were to find a path mid-way between 'kasha and world revolution' and concentrate on detailed political campaigning.

This view was reflected in an instruction, drafted by Belen'kii, adopted by the Presnenskii RK and ratified by a delegate meeting on 28 July 1919. The cells were to concentrate on ensuring the accurate fulfilment of party duties by the cell members by meeting weekly, distributing party literature, and so on. Above all, they were to ensure that communists had a 'normal' relationship with the broad mass of the workers and had no 'privileges', while at the same time reporting any counter-revolutionary behaviour. But the tension over limits to their authority is illustrated by the following passage:

It is absolutely inadmissible for factory party cells to interfere in the economic affairs of the factory

114. P, 4 March 1919.

115. P, 19 July 1919.



committee, but constant supervision over their [the committee's] work is essential.<sup>116</sup>

The instruction was one of the first attempts to provide a general definition of the role of the cells. Direct communist participation in management was considered a 'privilege' that would set the communist above the mass of the workers and hence was to be condemned. Soon after Myasnikov gave a more detailed exposition of the cell's functions. For him they were recruiting, educational, and supervisory bodies, but the last aspect was on no account to include settling major questions of principle. He criticised the vast majority of cells for interfering in technical, economic or political questions, thus engendering disputes. Above all the cells were to be concerned with the affairs of their enterprises.<sup>117</sup> Hence a two-fold restriction was placed on the cells: not to interfere in management; and to limit political discussion - 'world revolution' as Bukharin had put it.

Myasnikov gave details on the internal organisation of cells. They were to be led by a bureau of three, comprising the cell secretary, a cell organiser, and a delegate to the party committee and delegate meetings. He was categorical that the cell was not to have a chairman but that the bureau was to run the cell collectively. Cells did not have the right to collect membership dues, and they were formed and dissolved by the higher party body.<sup>118</sup>

It was only with the adoption of the party statute at the

116. P, 2 August 1919; VIMS, 29 July, 8 August 1919.

117. P, 13 August 1919.

118. P, 13 August 1919.

VIII party conference that a general definition of the role of the cell was advanced. For the first time it was stressed that the cell was the basic unit of the party, and not the RK or any other larger territorial unit as proposed by the old statute. The party was to be based on the 'production' principle, the individual factory and institution. The statute then gave details on the functions of the cells:

The cell is an organisation linking the worker and peasant masses with the leading party organ in the given locality. The tasks of the cell are: 1. diffusing party slogans and decisions among the masses; 2. recruiting new members; 3. supporting the local [factory] committee in its organisational and agitational work; 4. active participation, as a party organ,<sup>119</sup> in the economic and political life of the country.

This formulation gave no definition of what the last point meant in practice and still left the field open to conflicts. The March 1920 MPO statute combined Myasnikov's detailed provisions on organising cells with the general statute's definition of their role.<sup>120</sup> The IX party congress resolution on organisational questions refined the limited role of the cells. Its members were to act as a moral example to other workers in their devotion to labour, to have no advantages over other workers, and 'in no circumstances to interfere in management' but only to ensure that the latter's decisions were fulfilled.<sup>121</sup>

The Moscow statute for the joint organisation (May 1920) now devoted a considerable section (25 clauses out of 72) to the cells. The RKs were to redistribute communists so that a cell could be formed in every enterprise. The cells were 'to fulfil

119. VIII konf. RKP, p.197.

120. VIMS, 11 March 1920.

121. IX s"ezd RKP, p.426.

all decisions of higher party organs'. to conduct communist propaganda, and to wage a 'merciless struggle against infringements of labour discipline'. Amongst their many tasks, such as ensuring the military training of its members, participation in subbotniks, agitprop among women workers, youth, and so on, the cells were to ensure that the plant was managed in 'strict accordance with the principles of the RKP'. Disciplinary measures could now be taken by the cell against its own members with the permission of the RK. Once again it was stressed that conflicts between cells and management were to be taken to a higher party body.<sup>122</sup> By the 1930s the latter provision had changed and it was the economic body that mediated between cell and management.

The adoption of this statute marked the important shift that had taken place towards making the cells the chief focus of party life, but at the same time gave little scope for cell initiative beyond the strictly defined limits set down by the statute. The change in the definition of the cell was an important element in the 'internal metamorphosis' of the party. In contrast, for example, the December 1918 statute adopted by the Moscow guberniya organisation, dominated by the Democratic Centralists, had stated that 'the cell discusses all decrees, resolutions, instructions from soviet and party centres'.<sup>123</sup> By 1920 the cell was allowed to discuss questions, as the December 1919 statute put it, only up to the time that a decision had been taken,<sup>124</sup>

122. Ustav MPO 1920, pp.10-13.

123. Ustav Moskovskoi gubernskoi organizatsii RKP(b), M. 1919, p.3.

and instead its main role was to execute higher party policy, and the change was one more aspect of the split between the verkhni and the nizy.

The restricted role of the cell was applied in the TsK's instructions on their functions in labour duty. They were to set personal examples of labour discipline, to lead the 'merciless struggle' mentioned above, conduct agitation, and to inform local bodies of any failings. In keeping with earlier decisions, no cell member was to interfere in the work of any body but to inform the labour committee (Moskomtrud) of any problems.<sup>124</sup>

One of the key duties of the cells outlined by the May 1920 statute, and mentioned in earlier instructions, was to advance its members into key positions in the factory committees (mestkomy). As a report from Gorodskoi raion put it in 1918, by July 13 out of the 30 major plants had been 'seized' by the Bolsheviks.<sup>125</sup> In factories where the SRs had been strong the Bolsheviks cells had at an early stage become the legatees of their declining popularity, though during the civil war they did stage a minor comeback as in the Guzhon plant. By October 1917, for example, the Bolsheviks dominated the Dinamo plant in Simonovskii raion where once the SRs had been influential. But Bolshevik dominance was not expressed through a large cell, which only had about 10-12 members out of 400 workers in July 1918 and remained at this level for the duration of the war, but through control of the factory committee.<sup>126</sup>

124. Izvestiya po trud. pov., 5, 21 June 1920.

125. P, 16 July 1918.

126. Dinamo-25 let revolyutsionnie bor'by, MK RKP(b), M. 1923.

The cells had more difficulty seizing the mestkomy of plants that were or had been Menshevik. This was true above all of the printshops. The struggle against the Moscow print union at the city level was paralleled by a strategy of gradual pressure at the shopfloor. At the ex-Kushner print shop in Krasnopresnenskii raion, for example, a cell of 3 had been founded after the October 1919 party week and by January 1920 had grown to 13 out of 565 workers. Despite its smallness the communist group waged a long struggle to dominate the mestkom as part of the strategy to 'seize' the print union as enunciated by Pravda in early 1920.<sup>127</sup> In this plant the mestkom was led by an experienced and popular Menshevik and remained in Menshevik hands until 1922.<sup>128</sup> In general, the major task of the cell was to ensure the 'communisation' of the TU committee by ensuring that communists were a majority on them. The cell in the main military stores, for example, waged a long struggle to ensure this, though the chairman of the committee remained non-party until 1923 owing to his popularity giving him large majorities at elections.<sup>129</sup>

In all of their activities the cells were hampered by the lack of communists at their disposal and by their poor organisation, the repetitive nature of meetings, and the general

p.79; L. Shiplin, Sh. Gekhman, N. Sominskii, Bol'shevistskii put' bor'by i pobed (30 let yacheiki VKP(b) zavoda 'Dinamo'), M. 1933, p.92.

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127. P, 12 February 1919.

128. Pyat' let raboty yacheiki RKP(b) tipografii 'Krasnyi proletarii' 1919-24gg., M. 1925, pp.8-9, 23.

129. Pyat' let raboty - Glavkhozsklada RKKA, pp.14, 39.

apathy of party members. At a meeting of cell secretaries of Khamovnicheskii raion on 19 March 1920, for instance, only half turned up,<sup>130</sup> and in July in that raion only a few communists attended a general meeting.<sup>131</sup> Only 15 cell secretaries out of 50 attended a meeting called for them in a ward of Gorodskoi raion in July 1920.<sup>132</sup> Attendance was particularly poor in the office cells. The Narkompros cell officially numbered 130 communists, but at a meeting on 9 May 1920 only 3 attended.<sup>133</sup> Such examples could be multiplied, and were frequently reported in the press.

Some attempts were made in 1920 to improve the cells as attention was focused on them. First of all, the MK bureau on 2 March 1920 ruled that cells, and not fractions, were to be formed in the soviet and military institutions. Fractions were to be formed only in elected representative organisations such as the soviets and trade unions, and at conferences, otherwise the more restricted cells were to be the rule.<sup>134</sup> At the same time the bureau decided that the cell secretary was to be a responsible raion party worker.<sup>135</sup> This measure was facilitated by merging weaker cells with stronger ones on the division of raions into wards.<sup>136</sup> As mentioned, the first attempts were made to shift communists from offices to factories.

Cell membership appears to have become a formal commitment lacking enthusiasm on the part of communists. In May 1920 the MK

130. KT, 21 March 1920.

131. KT, 31 July 1920.

132. KT, 31 July 1920.

133. KT, 15 May 1920.

134. VIMS, 6 March 1920.

135. Tarusov, p.25.

136. KT, 18 March 1920.

admitted that there was little activity in the cells and that they restricted themselves to fulfilling directives from above and getting meetings over with.<sup>137</sup> The MK urged that discipline could be inculcated by using the party court, especially in the matter of missing meetings, or arriving late and leaving early.<sup>138</sup> A report on the cells in Gorodskoi raion noted that they were still mainly concerned with local 'economic' problems and disputes with management at the expense with general party work.<sup>139</sup> The war still prevented a concentration of resources on the cells. A few days after this report once again a list of cell members was distributed by the RK for mobilisation to the Polish front prefaced by the warning that recalcitrancy would be treated as desertion.<sup>140</sup> Moroz, the Gorodskoi RK secretary, on 27 August 1920 informed a party meeting that the majority of cells still lacked organisers and secretaries. In his RK report on 1 September he declared that work in organising cells had barely begun.<sup>141</sup> On that day he announced that the MK considered the cells the main priority, and stated that the cell secretaries in the raion were to have a permanent secretary in order to devote all their time to organisational improvement.<sup>142</sup> Following the IX party conference the MK called on the RKs to register all able party activists according to a three-fold division of descending ability, and to use this as the basis of assigning (prikreplenie) activists to cells as organisers.<sup>143</sup> In

137. KT, 8 May 1920.

138. KT, 15 May 1920.

139. KT, 16 June 1920.

140. KT, 18 June 1920

141. P, 12 September 1920.

142. KT, 7 September 1920.

143. Otchet Sok. RK-ta, p.8.

the great majority of cells in the MPO there were no full-time party secretaries until well into the 1920s.

The civil war therefore saw the redefinition of the role of the cells and the first attempts to consolidate the workplace cell as the basis of the party, but the very pressure of the war ensured that this programme would only be effected with the coming of peace. The oblast party organisations had been abolished, and with the system of electing the MK at a city conference the RPOs were undermined. Henceforth it was to be the uniformly organised gubkomy and the cells that were to be the main centres of party life. Party life in the raions was above all concentrated in the hands of the RKs who had become the executive agents of the MK, and the individual party member increasingly became the executor of policy decided far from the workplace.

## 6. The party member

With the exodus of party members into state posts after October 1917 the link between the individual communist and the party organisation often became extremely tenuous. From the summer of 1918 the attempt began, if not to halt the tide into state work, at least to reassert the member's affiliation with the organisation and thus to ensure control over state cadres and hence the organisations in which they worked. As the 22 May 1918 TsK letter put it:

...Every party member, whatever work they are fulfilling, must pay the most serious attention to party construction. We must raise the discipline of the party ranks. Resolutions and decisions of party centres must be binding on all and must be undeviatingly implemented



by every party member. From the moment a decision is taken discussion ends and the time for action alone arrives.<sup>144</sup>

This party discipline was to be both in the physical sense of making demands on the member (military training, subbotniks, attending meetings, etc.,) in order to prevent the formation of a 'passive' group of members, and also in the ideological sense to ensure their subordination to central decisions and to avoid a new elite developing based on an ideology of state service. A survey in Moscow at the end of May 1918 discovered, in the words of the TsK, that '...it is clear that a whole number of comrade communists are so only in name since they are not involved in any party work'.<sup>145</sup> The attempt was now made to effect Sverdlov's words at the VII party congress that the interests of the party were higher than those of the individual party member.

One of the first measures to be adopted in this sphere was the reservation of Fridays for party work. This was the main concrete result of two meetings held to improve the condition of the MPO, the first on 30 March 1918 chaired by Sverdlov, and the second on 4 May with Lenin present.<sup>146</sup> Party leaders and those in state posts were to address factory meetings as a way of involving them in party work. The measure encountered some resistance. Lomov for example, at the time working in VSNKh, answered the MK's request not to arrange meetings on Fridays by writing: 'Comrades, I am not a child and you are not infants. I therefore ask you not to make such requests'.<sup>147</sup> The demand

144. Perepiska, vol.III, p.73.

145. ibid., p.121.

146. Lenin i Moskovskie bol'sheviki, p.305.

147. ibid., p.322.

became less formalised later with the simple exhortation for responsible workers not to speak less than once a week at workers' meetings,<sup>148</sup> and this remained in force for the rest of the war.

The 28 May 1918 city party conference called on all MPO members to join a cell and 'to unite around party organisations'.<sup>149</sup> In Zamoskvorech'e the party committee and soviet on 13 June 1918 insisted that no party member could leave their post without the sanction of the committee<sup>150</sup> in a measure designed to conserve cadres and to ensure that members could be traced. At the same time the MK urged all members to attend a party meeting at least once a week.<sup>151</sup> These various measures were systematised by the 30 July city party conference special decree on the party duties of communists. All were to be attached to an organisation and were to participate in party work in a disciplined way, and in tune with the increasingly military atmosphere it was now stated that irrespective of family circumstances in case of necessity every party member was at the full disposal of the party organisation.<sup>152</sup> The military note was emphasised a few days later when the MK decided that communists working in soviet institutions could only take holidays with the permission of the MK or RK.<sup>153</sup>

With the great numbers of communists working in offices it was only natural that the party committees concentrated on ensuring a modicum of party discipline over them, considered at

148. P, 20 June 1918.

149. P, 30 May 1918.

150. Uprochenie, p.41.

151. P, 20 June 1918.

152. P, 2 August 1918.

153. P, 8 August 1918.

the time a way of averting their bureaucratisation. The MK meeting of 14-15 September 1918 emphasised the need for what it called 'party duty'. All RKs were to have accurate registers of party members and that all were to be drawn into party work irrespective of their post in soviet institutions or commissariats.<sup>154</sup> As part of this campaign at the end of 1918, at a time of concern over the issue as we have seen, the TSK called on all LPOs to conduct a census of party members working in soviet offices, a measure which also had military implications.<sup>155</sup> Both the TSK<sup>156</sup> and the MK on the eve of the VIII party congress intensified the campaign to involve all party members in their organisations. On 7 February the MK adopted a series of measures to ensure that all communists were linked to an organisation by insisting that they registered with the RPOs and were obliged 'once a week, on the day designated by the RK, to carry out party work...in the evenings'.<sup>157</sup> In all spheres of party and soviet activity the committees were trying to establish a sense of party discipline. These measures, designed to prevent the formation of a soviet bureaucratic caste, inevitably strengthened the role of the party committees over the party member and thus stimulated the formation of a party bureaucracy.

In December 1918 the MK issued a list of desiderata (nakaz) of every communist. Any free time not spent on study was to be devoted to party work, and all were to read the party press.<sup>158</sup> The VIII party congress took the notion to the limit when

154. P, 15, 16, September 1918. 155. Perepiska, vol.V, p.60.

156. P, 8 February 1919. 157. Lenin i Mosk. bols., p.375.

158. Kommunar, 56, 14 December 1918.

Kaganovich, the strict centralist, took up the notion of 'party duty' (analogous to labour duty) to be established whereby every party member was to be registered and 'correctly' used.<sup>159</sup> The idea was greeted favourably, with Osinskii only asking that in party duty a certain proportion were to be devoted to party work itself. While Osinskii devoted most of his attention to the deficiencies of the TSK, he noted that both in the centre and the localities work was being transferred to the committees as the main beneficiaries of the party process as it had developed in the first phase of the civil war.<sup>160</sup>

The problem was that the party itself had turned into a giant transmission belt extracting workers from factories and transferring them to the state bodies and the army. Given the lack of maturity of the Moscow working class, so many of whose members had recently arrived from the countryside, and its relative smallness in relation to the magnitude of the tasks set by the Bolsheviks after the revolution, the available reserves of able and willing workers were rapidly exhausted. At the congress Osinskii noted that at the grass roots the party was 'filling up with rubbish', with tickets in hand but carrying no 'mental baggage'.<sup>161</sup> Nogin concurred that the party had 'gone to pieces' and that the behaviour of communists was bad enough to 'make your hair stand on end', and he argued that this was due to the fact that the majority of senior party members were no longer active party workers.<sup>162</sup> In his analysis, and in Sapronov's,<sup>163</sup>

159. VIII s"ezd RKP, p.180.

160. ibid., pp.183-4. 164-6.

161. ibid., pp.164-6.

162. ibid., pp.168-9.

163. ibid., p.170.

there was a tendency was to insist that the party could be saved by reinforcing the hegemony of the APW corps over the party, and further, that this corps was to consist mainly of the 'old guard' of the party.

It was left to Ignatov to identify the real problem: the bureaucratisation of the party and its isolation from the working class. He gave the example of the cell in the Prokhorovskaya mill which was 'isolated from the masses as if by a wall'. The priority should be party work, he argued, and not soviet work.<sup>164</sup> Both rank and file party members and workers from this time appear to have become apathetic. The Guzhon cell on 1 February 1919, for example, noted that the majority of its members failed to attend.<sup>165</sup> The passive response of those who did attend was increasingly highlighted. A report in April 1919 noted that the Friday meetings no longer interested workers. Their wavering could only be overcome, it was argued, if every party member devoted half of his time to party work.<sup>166</sup> An example of the passivity of party members, criticised at the time, was the 27 April 1920 Gorodskoi delegate meeting. The RK report for the previous six months was passed with almost no discussion.<sup>167</sup> The passivity of the membership was balanced by the activity of the RK which had met regularly every week, and by the bureau, which had met twice weekly.<sup>168</sup> There was inevitably a tension within every rank and file worker communist between loyalty to the party and loyalty to his or her workmates. This would be

164. ibid., pp.181-2.

165. VIMS, 6 February 1919.

166. VIMS, 5 April 1919.

167. KT, 4 May 1920.

168. KT, 5 May 1920.

particularly acute when the call went out for the communist to act as the 'eyes and ears' of the authorities in the localities, as in mid-1920. There was the obvious danger that the rank and file member would identify too closely with fellow workers.

To counter this there were endless exhortations for party members to participate in the various party ventures, and when exhortations failed stricter measures were proposed. Kotov, active in the Sokol'nicheskii RK and in 1920 a supporter of Trotsky's militarisation plans, on 8 September 1919 attacked the poor attitude of party members to their duties and insisted that this was to be remedied by 'barracks discipline'.<sup>169</sup> An MK circular of March 1920 on party discipline pointed out that the MPO still had a long way to go to reach the required level.<sup>170</sup> This contention appeared to be borne out by the August 1920 reregistration. The main problem was the sheer burden of activities placed on the average party member. The example was given in December 1920 of the communist who in one month had to attend the ward school eight times, cell meetings four times, two subbotniks, two military (ChON) training sessions, one general party meeting, two factory meetings, one ChON patrol, quite apart from other general meetings, not to mention his work. At the time the MK tried to lighten the burden somewhat for those involved in military training and studies.<sup>171</sup>

Breaches of party discipline and lapses in Bolshevik moral probity were dealt with by the court of honour (sud chesti) under the MK. In early 1918 the court was an elective body. Later the

169. P, 12 September 1920.

170. VIMS, 9 March 1920.

171. KT, 12 December 1920.

MK decided that three raions at a time were to send representatives of mature members to sit on the court. In September 1919 this was once again amended and the MK made direct appointments to it, in the first instance Belikov, Myasnikov and Ignatov.<sup>172</sup> It dealt with such cases as return from the front without permission, not fulfilling party directives on employment, drunkenness, and so on. In 1920 it was increasingly used to ensure the active participation of members in party work.<sup>173</sup> The punishment of the court was mainly censure,<sup>174</sup> though it could order expulsion.

The earlier Moscow party statutes had barely mentioned the individual party member. While the general party statute of December 1919 had allowed the party member free discussion of issues up to the time that a decision was taken,<sup>175</sup> the May 1920 Moscow statute, which for the first time had a large section on individual member discipline, omitted all mention of this right and instead listed duties:

Communists are responsible to the party organ for every step of their activity, therefore they must be precise and ardent executors of their party duties. Diligence, precision, and attention must be constantly ensured; deviations from them will incur the severest penalties.<sup>176</sup>

172. P, 2 September 1919.      173. KT, 23 April 1920.

174. In a letter sent out on behalf of the TsK on 29 May 1919 by Elena Stasova she attacked the practice of imposing fines on party members: 'Their punishment should only be of a moral character: social obloquy, publication of their names in newspapers, temporary suspension from active party work...The party member should be of a different moral calibre than those around him', Perepiska, vol.VII, pp.146-7.

175. VIII konf. RKP, pp.197-8.

176. Ustav MPO 1920, p.14.

This was a measure of the change that had taken place since 1917-18.

By 1920 passivity had become an offence, punishable by expulsion, and as an offence figured prominently in the 1921 purge. The campaigns waged against it were aimed at integrating all members irrespective of the post held into the organisations. Whether working in an office or a factory the allegiance was to be primarily to the party. But passivity, in the sense used by Lukacs, had become the hallmark of the individual party member by the end of the war. Decision-making had become the responsibility of the higher party bodies, and the cell member, the individual communist, was left to execute these decisions. The changing definition of the rights and duties of the individual party member illustrate the changes that had taken place during the civil war. The MK had become the supreme political authority in the localities, the raion party organisations acted as its local departments as the federalist period gave way to democratic centralism. The lively committees of 1917-18 had changed into administrative organisations and the party member organised in the cell had been deprived of direct management functions and instead was concerned with fulfilling party duties. The party's political functions were no longer the prerogative of each and every party member, but of the party as a whole and its new model committees.



## CHAPTER 6

### The Party and the Civil War: Militarisation

War communism was both a method of concentrating the country's human and material resources on winning the war, and a positive project for the rapid introduction of the elements of socialism in a backward country. The link between the two aspects was militarisation, the constant militant battle on all fronts to defeat the remnants of the old ideology and its material base. As Lenin put it at the VII congress of soviets in December 1919: 'Our war is a continuation of revolutionary policies...'.<sup>1</sup> At the same time all Bolshevik leaders were united in the belief that the civil war was only part of the global struggle against capitalism, and indeed, that on the outcome of the civil war hung not only the fate of the Russian revolution but also that of the world revolution.<sup>2</sup>

The methods chosen to prosecute the war, however, tended to reinforce traditional, hierarchical, and authoritarian patterns in the new context. The war accelerated the destruction of the old society but did not allow novel revolutionary relationships to emerge as part of the military struggle. Strict organisational discipline combined with mass mobilisation were the enduring legacies of the war.

1. Lenin PSS, vol.39, p.406.

2. Lenin PSS, vol.37, p.15.

1. The formation of the Red Army and the party mobilisations

The SNK decree on the formation of the Red Army of 15 January 1918 was followed by a period of voluntary enlistment. So-called revolutionary detachments, usually based on Red Guard units, were formed in Moscow. The largest of these was the I Moscow volunteer detachment of 500 people which saw action in the Ukraine.<sup>3</sup> Committed activists joined them during the Brest negotiations: 'The majority of workers did not accept the position taken by the Soviet government at Brest, and enthusiastically joined the volunteer detachments'.<sup>4</sup> The formation of these groups was the basis of the Left Communist's enthusiasm for a revolutionary war fought by partisan methods. The MK in February 1918, then opposed to the peace, forwarded communist volunteers to the German front,<sup>5</sup> and by April 1918 about 2000 Moscow communists had joined the Red Army.<sup>6</sup>

With the confirmation on 22 April 1918 by VTsIK of the SNK decree of 8 April the first steps were taken towards conscription by the universal military training of workers. At the same time the army was professionalised as it became clear, following the Brest peace, that the civil war would be fought in a conventional manner with commanders, specialists and spiced by Trotsky's calls

3. Put' k oktyabryu, issue 3, M. 1923, pp.116-124.

4. ibid., p.119.

5. Yu. P. Petrov, Partiinoe stroitel'stvo v sovetskoi armii i flote (1918-1961gg.), M. 1964, p.10.

6. Yu. P. Petrov, KPSS - Rukovoditel' i vospitatel' krasnoi armii (1918-1920gg.), M. 1961, p.101. In the first half of 1918 about 100,000 communists joined the army, with whole units composed of them, Petrov (1964), p.10.

for iron discipline. In response the Left Communists argued that the abandonment of the idea of a revolutionary war fought by partisan methods would entail a retreat from the direct organisation of the rear by the working class.<sup>7</sup> The use of military specialists was the counterpart to the employment of the old technical intelligentsia in the factories and was opposed within the same terms.

By October 1917 the officer corps of the Russian army numbered about 260,000, and some of these were willing to serve the Bolsheviks after the revolution. At first they joined voluntarily, but by the SNK decree of 25 July 1918 they became liable to conscription.<sup>8</sup> In 1918 alone 22,000 ex-officers were called into the new army. By April 1919 8142 ex-officers and 56,585 ex-NCOs had been drafted into the MVO (Moscow military district).<sup>9</sup> As the Soviet training schools began to produce their own officers the proportion of the old specialists in the commanding staff fell from 75% in late 1918, 53% in 1919, to 42% in 1920.<sup>10</sup>

There were two main types of party mobilisation to the Red Army. The most extensive was the mass mobilisation of party members in response to critical developments at the fronts. They were ordered by the TsK and usually ratified by a city party conference, and then implemented, as we have seen, by the raion

7. E.g., the Left Communist theses, Kommunist, 1, pp.4-9.

8. Petrov (1961), p.54.

9. Iz istorii grazhdanskoi voyny v SSSR, vol.2, M. 1961, p.104.

10. Petrov (1961), p.55; John Erickson, The Soviet High Command: A Military Political History, London 1962, p.33.

party organisations down to the cells. In 1918 there were four, and in 1919-20 five, major party mobilisations in Moscow.

The second type of mobilisation was personal direction to some responsible post either at the fronts or in the rear. In the centre these were carried out by the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars (the central military and political body of the Red Army in the early period) and then by the Political Administration of the Council of Defence (Politicheskoe upravlenie revvoensoveta - PUR RVSR).

The first mass party mobilisations took place in the Urals at the end of May 1918 following the Czech legion's revolt. For the local party organisations this signified the start of the military civil war. In the second half of 1918 over 5000 communists and another 40,000 were mobilised en masse. During the first phase of the civil war a total of 80,000 communists were sent to the fronts,<sup>11</sup> and between April and November 1920 another 24,244 were sent.<sup>12</sup>

Following reverses against the Czechs in July 1918 the TSK decided that communist drafts were essential to stiffen the resistance of the Red Army.<sup>13</sup> As a result the Moscow city party conference on 30 July decided that within a week one-fifth of the total membership of the MPO, including all those with military experience and especially commander training, were to be placed at the disposal of the military commissariat for the needs of the front, and all party organisations were placed on a war

11. Istoriya KPSS, issue 12, L. 1972, pp.167-8.

12. X s"ezd RKP, p.797.

13. 29 July 1918, Perepiska, vol.III, pp.127-9.

footing.<sup>14</sup> This first MPO mobilisation led to 700 communists leaving for the front, including many of the most experienced members.<sup>15</sup> A second MPO mobilisation took place after the 29 August 1918 city party conference. It is from this period that the beginning of the special communist detachments (ChON) can be dated (see below).<sup>16</sup>

With successes registered at the fronts in September 1918 a notable relaxation of military discipline took place. It appeared as if the war would be a short one. This attitude was encouraged by over-optimistic expectations of the revolution spreading to Western Europe stimulated by news of the events in Germany. However, the military situation took a turn for the worse in autumn 1918, and the 15 October 1918 city party conference sent another group of communists to the front.<sup>17</sup> A fourth city mobilisation was ordered by the MK on 19 November which covered not only party members but also 25% of the sympathisers. According to incomplete figures the city sent about 2000 communists, over a tenth of its membership, to the Eastern front in 1918.<sup>18</sup> This pattern of frequent mobilisations continued throughout the civil war.

With the renewed threat from Kolchak in the East in spring 1919 new mobilisations were declared. In fulfilment of the 13 April 1919 TsK declaration of party mobilisations of 10-20% of

14. P, 2 August 1918.

15. Ocherki ist. MO KPSS, p.330; Istoriya Moskvyy, vol.6, book 1, p. 161.

16. Moskovskaya gorodskaya, p.21; I.M. Razgon, Moskva v period inostrannoi interventsii i grazhdanskoi voiny, M. 1947, p.13.

17. Ignat'ev, p.210.

18. Bukov, p.64.

each organisation Sushchevsko-Mar'inskii and Butyrskii raions, for example, sent up to 60% of their membership. In Sokol'nicheskii raion out of 54 cells only 34 remained after the mobilisations.<sup>19</sup> A special target was the communists in the various commissariats and offices. At the city party conference on 3 May 1919 Smilga demanded that the offices gave up their employees even if this meant that they could no longer function. Yaroslavskii pointed out, however, that even communist heads of department were hindering the release of staff on the grounds that they were irreplaceable. The conference called for a survey to be conducted of all the staff in offices, the replacement of male labour by female, and for the campaign against desertion to be intensified.<sup>20</sup>

With Yudenich's advance on Petrograd the TsK called for renewed mobilisations of party, TU, and office personnel.<sup>21</sup> A party circular of 18 June 1919 stressed that the mobilisation of communists to the fronts was required not only for military but also for political reasons. It insisted that communists were to be taken from responsible posts even if departments collapsed

19. Ocherki ist. MO KPSS, vol.2, p.123; P, 9 May 1919.

20. P, 6 May 1919.

21. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 1, 28 May 1919. In a quixotic gesture of solidarity with Petrograd Kamenev in May 1919 suggested that half of the Moscow soviet's deputies should be sent to defend the Northern city (Stenotchety MS, 15, 1919, p.232). In the event only 44 deputies went since it was felt that more would seriously disrupt the work of the soviet (ibid., 17, 1919, p.252). Raion soviet deputies went to Petrograd in this draft (ibid., 16, 1919, p.245). On later occasions there were mass drafts from the Moscow soviet: in April 1920; and at the end of the month another 20% were sent to fight the Poles, KT, 4 May 1919.

without them.<sup>22</sup> The pressure for communists to leave was so intense that even the sick and the old were caught in the trawl.<sup>23</sup> These desperate measures were confirmed by the TsK on 19 July 1919 which insisted that communists except those involved in all but the most political agitprop work in offices were to be replaced by trustworthy non-party people.<sup>24</sup>

In mid-1919 Soviet forces registered successes against Kolchak, but the main danger shifted to Denikin's advance from the South. Trotsky drove home the implications of the war and mobilisations at the 24 September 1919 city party conference where he was the main military rapporteur. He presented a pessimistic survey of the possibilities of revolution in the West, but was more hopeful of the East (India, Persia, Afghanistan). On his motion the MPO was placed under martial law: all communists were to be removed from 'civilian and undoubtedly necessary posts and transferred to military work'; all bodies and institutions were to devote themselves to the needs of the garrison; and the intensity of labour in all enterprises directly serving the army was to be raised.<sup>25</sup>

Between April and October 1919 PUR RVSR sent 8953 communists to the front.<sup>26</sup> Of the 5427 sent in October 1919 3624 were from the MPO, one thousand of whom went directly to the Denikin front.<sup>27</sup> The mobilisations had a disastrous effect on the local

22. Perepiska, vol.VIII, pp.56-7.

23. Manievich, p.169.

24. Perepiska, vol.VIII, p.169.

25. P, 26 September 1919.

26. KT, 8 May 1920.

27. Ocherki ist. MO KPSS, p.331. Between 1 April 1919 and 1 March 1920 PUR RVSR sent a total of 11,675 communists to the fronts, 1451 of whom as political workers. Of the total, 875

party organisations. For instance, in the small Blagushe-Lefortovo raion between October 1918 and March 1919 248 communists were mobilised,<sup>28</sup> over half of its total membership. In June 1919 alone 69 communists were taken, most of whom were sent to the Petrograd front.<sup>29</sup> When a mobilisation of communists was announced at a delegate meeting in Zamoskvorech'e on 1 October 1919 the order was imposed that not a single communist was to leave the city without permission.<sup>30</sup> This was a recognition that some communists would attempt to avoid the draft by going into the countryside because, as Zagorskii told an MK meeting earlier, 'all the best communists have gone'.<sup>31</sup>

The quality of the recruits was rapidly falling as the party was squeezed ever harder to fill the quotas. Krestinskii admitted as much to the VIII conference when he reported that mass party mobilisations had ceased since 8 July 1919 because of their poor quality. Instead, personal mobilisation for specific tasks had been applied.<sup>32</sup> Mgeladze agreed that there had been a fall in quality and blamed the lack of coordination between the military and political departments and the local party organisations.<sup>33</sup>

(7.5%) had joined before 1917, 1894 (16.2%) in 1917, and the great majority, 5148 (44.1%), in 1918 or later,  
Iz ist. grazh. voiny, vol.2, p.779.

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28. Manievich, p.169. 207 for the front, 30 for supplies, and 11 for transport.

29. ibid., p.170.

30. P, 4 October 1919.

31. Lenin i Mosk. bols., p.348.

32. VIII konf. RKP, p.28.

33. ibid., p.34.



The TsK itself was increasingly concerned about the quality of the latest recruits. It noted in mid-1919 that there were many cases of communists either leaving the front of their own accord or refusing to obey orders. It drew the conclusion that despite the reregistration there were still many communists unworthy of the name.<sup>34</sup> The TsK still called for nine-tenths of the party to be given to the army, 'the sword of the working class', and insisted that the army party member was to have no privileges except to be in the most dangerous place.<sup>35</sup> We have noted that the cells in the rear were gradually restricted in their functions, and below we shall look at the same process in the army. A few weeks later in a key circular the TsK summed up the organisational experience of the war. In the usual antinomian language of the time it called for the Soviet republic to be turned into a single armed camp. Collegiality was to be restricted as the source of much bureaucratism and red tape, and discussion was to be cut to a minimum.<sup>36</sup>

The influence of the general militarisation of life was reflected in the TsK Politburo call for the semi-military, semi-civilian forms of organisation employed at the fronts to be extended to the rear.<sup>37</sup> In Moscow in late 1919 semi-military forms of state organisation were already being practiced through the KOM (Moscow Committee of Defence). The body has already been mentioned (Chapter 3). It was revived on 5 September 1919, in

34. 5 July 1919, Perepiska, vol.VIII, pp.105-6.

35. 14 July 1919, Perepiska, vol.VIII, p.146.

36. Vse na bor'bu s Denikinym, 9 July 1919, Perepiska, vol.VIII, p.114-29.

37. VIMS, 23 October 1919.

response to the Denikin threat, and martial law was declared for the city the next day. Kamenev was chairman, and the committee included Zagorskii (MK secretary) until his death on 25 September 1919, representatives of the Cheka including Peters, and members of the city and guberniya soviet ispolkomy.<sup>38</sup> KOM worked in close liason with the TSK and the Council of Defence. With a general headquarters, partisan detachments were organised in the factories, and the ChON were put on alert.<sup>39</sup>

KOM's powers cut across the jurisdictions of all the other civil bodies in Moscow. At the 24 September 1919 city party conference Zagorskii reported on its work (Kamenev being ill). Its measures had included the registration of all the 'non-labouring elements' and the intensified battle against desertion, speculation, and other 'destabilising phenomena'. In the previous week alone the Cheka had arrested 700 people in the city,<sup>40</sup> who, according to Dzerzhinskii at the conference, had been involved in the National Centre's plot to seize the city.<sup>41</sup> While it lasted KOM had dictatorial powers in the city, and decrees affecting all aspects of Moscow's life were issued either in its name or jointly with other bodies. With the military advantage turning in the republic's favour by the end of the year the Moscow soviet ispolkom on 25 December 1919 decided on its abolition.<sup>42</sup>

38. On 24 September Peters was replaced by Dzerzhinskii whose task was to ensure that KOM's orders were carried out. The chairman of the gubispolkom Safronov and the chairman of the MChK Mantsev also joined, and following Zagorskii's death Myasnikov took his place, Aleshchenko (1976), p.129.

39. VIMS, 30 September 1919. 40. P, 27 September 1919.

41. Iz ist. grazh. voiny, vol.2, p.461.

42. VIMS, 26 December 1919. In mid-1920 KOM was briefly revived.

With the advent of the Polish war in 1920 the civil war took on some of the characteristics of a national war. For Lenin this war signified the emergence of the Soviet state as a factor in the international arena and revived the concept of a revolutionary war.<sup>43</sup> From April 1920 there were frequent drafts of Moscow communists to the Western front. A feature of these mobilisations was the high number of responsible communists sent by personal assignment, reflecting both the need for more political workers on a sensitive front, and the reduced effectiveness of mass mobilisations. Between April and September 1920 about 2000 Moscow communists were sent to this front.<sup>44</sup> The final military mobilisations were against Wrangel and Makhno, and began with the mobilisation of 75 Moscow communists on 18 August 1920.<sup>45</sup>

As we have seen there were instances of reluctance on the part of communists, both rank and file and activists, to go to the fronts. To enforce the mobilisations the MK's own role as arbiter of manpower disposition was strengthened. The MK insisted that refusal to be mobilised meant expulsion from the party,<sup>46</sup> and there were cases of this in the 1920 reregistration as we have seen. It was during the civil war that the MK took on the

43. Lenin PSS, vol.41, p.283. This aspect of the Polish war is argued by Norman Davies, 'The Missing Revolutionary War', Soviet Studies, vol.27, (April 1975), pp.178-95.

44. KT, 29 April, 4, 9 May, 20, 23 June, 9 July, 28, 31 August 1920. Between January and December 1920 PUR RVSR sent a total of 14,659 political workers to the fronts and soviet institutions, with a peak of 3692 in May alone in connection with the Polish war, Iz ist. grazh. voyny, vol.3, pp.166-7. The TSK carried out 14 mobilisations between April and December 1920 involving 26,211 communists, ibid., p.181.

45. KT, 18 August 1920.

46. KT, 18 May 1920.

militarised function of centralised assignment of party members. It emphasised that it alone was responsible for the distribution of communists in Moscow.<sup>47</sup>

Moscow's communists were liable also to non-military mobilisations. The most important of these were for supply, fuel, transport, sowing, and general military work.<sup>48</sup> The list below shows the pattern of mobilisation for the typical month of July 1920:<sup>49</sup>

To the front from factories and soviet institutions	549
To the front from defence enterprises	184
Responsible party workers for fuel work	28
Rank and file party members for fuel work	111
To gather the harvest	104
TOTAL	1276

A clear distinction was drawn between activists and rank and file party members and the mobilisations tended to reinforce the distinction between the two groups. The mobilisations continued after the end of the war.<sup>50</sup> In the first half of 1921 the MK carried out 14 mobilisations in which over a thousand activists were sent to various fields of economic, soviet and party work

47. KT, 26 August 1920.

48. In early February 1920 the MK announced a major campaign to send communists to help with the spring sowing in the Moscow, Voronezh, and Tambov gubernii. Moscow was initially to send 500 communists (KT, 3 February 1920). In early April 1920 the MK sent 102 communists 'to raise the political level' of the railway workers, KT, 3 April 1920.

49. Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., p.6; KT, 4 August 1920.

50. In October 1920 there were three non-military mobilisations: the TsK took 30 for its own purposes, 35 women were sent to Astrakhan for work among fishermen, and a third group of 145 were sent to work in the MChK special department (OO) (Otchet MK za oktyabr' 1920g., p.9). At the end of January 1921 the MK received from the TsK the request to mobilise 850 rank and file members and 55 responsible communists for the sowing campaign, Otchet MK za yanvar' 1920g., p.4.

throughout the country.<sup>51</sup>

Between 1918 and 1921 66-70% of all Moscow communists served in the Red Army.<sup>52</sup> The 1920 reregistration revealed that only 8040 (31.1%) out of 25,501 members were exempt from military service, while 13,890 (53.7%) were in or had been in line units, and the proportion rises to 62.7% if those training are included.<sup>53</sup> The party layer in the army during the volunteer period had been very high at between 15-20% in most units in Moscow, and in some 25%.<sup>54</sup> With the mass mobilisations of late 1918 and early 1919 the party layer in Moscow fallen rapidly to 4.6% but the intensified mobilisation of communists boosted it to just over 8% in mid-1919, and this level was maintained to the end of 1920.<sup>55</sup> The influx of nearly 8000 communists to the Moscow garrison during the party week of October 1919 was rapidly

51. Otchet o deyatel'nosti MK za iyul', avgust i sentyabr' 1921g., p.30.

52. Vserossiiskaya perepis' chlenov RKP 1922g., issue 4, M. 1922, p.11. Out of 32,000 members in 1922 21,000 (65.6%) had served at the front, Izvestiya MK RKP, 2, 20 June 1920, p.9.

53. The rest were training or their status was not known. In the guberniya 2312 (48.3%) out of 4786 members were exempt, revealing the higher proportion of party members in positions which were deemed vital. In the country as a whole in 36 gubernii, excluding the two capitals, 90,270 (63%) were in or had been in line units, while 42,024 (30%) were exempt, Materialy po statistike, pp.10-11.

54. Petrov (1964), p.12.

55. The party layer in the Moscow city garrison in early 1919 ranged from a high of 11% in Krasnopresnenskii to a low of 0.1% in Zamoskvorech'e. By early 1920 the party layer had reached 8.5%, ranging from a high of 12.6% in Basmannyi to the low of 4%, once again in Zamoskvorech'e. The Polish war saw the departure of communists to this politically sensitive front and by September 1920 the party layer had fallen slightly to 7.3%, with a high of 10% in Khamovnicheskii raion and a low of 4.9% in Sokol'nicheskii, Otchet voennogo otdela, p.14.

dispersed as units moved out of Moscow. The size of the Moscow city garrison had a tendency to increase: from about 100,000 men in June 1919 it had expanded to over 150,000 in June 1920, and correspondingly the number of units had increased from 178 to 265. Almost every unit had a party cell in which, for example, the 7250 army communists and 149 candidates in June 1919 and the 9792 communists and 2513 candidates of June 1920, were organised.<sup>56</sup>

The average military cell both in Moscow and the country consisted of 46 communists and candidates. By August 1920 there were 278,043 communists in the army spread over 6937 cells and comprised about 8% of the Red Army.<sup>57</sup> A large proportion of the RPOs consisted of soldiers, this standing at 39.3% of male membership (excluding candidates) in six raions (excluding Baumanskii) in September 1920.<sup>58</sup> A high percentage of these, however, were not rank and file soldiers, and indeed the average party layer of 8% in Moscow exaggerates the proportion of communists in line units. Out of a total of 8848 military communists in all seven raions on 1 October 1920 only 2500 (28.2%) were in line units, while 3356 (37.9%) were on

56. Otchet voennogo otdela, appendix.

57. Petrov (1964), pp.107-8. Of these, 120,185 communists and candidates were at the fronts in 2962 cells; and 157,858 in 3975 cells in the 12 rear military districts. The Moscow garrison's communists at that time comprised 3.9% of all the communists in the army, and 6.3% of those in the rear.

58. The proportion ranges from a peak of 731 soldiers out of 1238 members (59%) in Khamovnicheskii raion, 2720 out of 5871 (46.3%) in Krasnopresnenskii, 1650 out of 4748 (34.7%) in Gorodskoi, 282 out of 822 (34.3%) in Zamoskvorech'e, down to 428 out of 1675 (25.5%) in Sokol'nicheskii, otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.10.

courses and a massive 21.2% (1879) were in staff headquarters, military boards and institutions.<sup>59</sup>

Therefore, the party layer in line units is lower than the figures would at first suggest, and in Moscow it would be more accurate to put it at 3-4%. Table 17 supports this conclusion by showing that out of 5575 city members in the army on 1 September 1920 only 2095 (37.6%) were rank and file soldiers. This is consistent with the general pattern of under-representation of rank and file soldiers in army party organisations which continues to this day.<sup>60</sup>

It was the emerging officer group which acted as the intermediary in the inculcation of military virtues in the party. Much later Trotsky identified the army communists as a definite group:

The demobilisation of the Red Army of five million played no small role in the formation of the bureaucracy. The victorious commanders assumed leading posts in the local Soviets, in economy, in education, and they persistently introduced everywhere that regime which had ensured success in the civil war. Thus on all sides the masses were pushed away gradually from the actual participation in the leadership of the country.<sup>61</sup>

The root of the problem lay in the very organisation of the army on traditional lines, as the Left Communists had warned in 1918. Not only were the rank and file factory communists as a group weakened as by the mobilisations but once in the army the party rank and file in it were deprived of an

59. Another 1113 were in military hospitals, the militia, and the fire brigade, Otchet voennogo otdela, p.17.

60. T.J. Colton, Commissars, Commanders and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics, Harvard UP, 1979, p.16.

61. Trotsky, Revolution Betrayed, pp.89-90.

effective voice in organising the army. At the same time the party commanders and activists imbued the military spirit while serving at the fronts.

The mobilisations reinforced the spirit of 'campaignology' in the party. Faced with one threat after another the party centres consolidated their prerogatives over the party member and took on quasi-military forms themselves. The shock-style permeated all spheres of the MPO's work. Nevertheless, the internal changes of the MPO, while marked by the war, were not determined by it. Military methods were accepted as necessary, but as soon as the chance arose they were mitigated, as in the abolition of KOM. The civil war did not guarantee the victory of the centralisers over the democratisers: this was to be the legacy of the debates from late 1920.

## 2. Party organisation in the Red Army

Civil-military relations in the Soviet republic from the first have been marked by the party's dominant role, reflecting the fact that the army was the child of the party. In China the role that the soviets played in Russia in mobilising revolutionary energies was taken by the People's Liberation Army, and hence the army remained as the residual fount of the democratic phase of the revolution - a source tapped by Lin Piao during the Cultural Revolution. In Russia the creation of the traditionally-organised Red Army marked precisely the beginning of the revolutionary compromise, as the Left Communists were quick to point out. The creation of the Red Army entailed the adoption of traditional military command structures and the curtailment of soldier control of the officers, typical of late



1917, and its replacement by party supervision by commissars over the military specialists. The party arrogated to itself the responsibilities of political control previously vested in the popular movement, but the actual relationships between the LPOs and the military authorities was only gradually established.

In the centre a plethora of bodies during the civil war held responsibility for military affairs: from the Military Commissariat itself and its local departments; the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars formed on 3 April 1918; the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic (RVSR) formed on 6 September 1918; to the civilian Glavpolitprosvet in early 1921 responsible for political education in the army. The confusion at the centre was reflected in the localities, above all in the relationship between army and local party organisation, party cells and commissars, and commissariats and party military departments.

The high percentage of communists in the army during the volunteer phase has been noted. All decisions concerning their units, including recruitment, supply, political education, and so on, were concentrated in this party group. With the introduction of conscription in 1918 the party layer decreased and at the same time the development of a conventional army restricted their rights. The role of the military commissars, both as supervisors over the military specialists and over the party cells, increased. Inevitably frequent conflicts between the cells, accustomed to controlling their units, and the commissars, erupted. At the same time political departments under armies, and then under regiments, were formed. Initially they were concerned with agitation but by the end of 1918 claimed tutelage

over communists in the army.<sup>62</sup>

In Moscow views in 1918 were divided over the rights of army cells. The instruction adopted by the conference of soldier communists in April 1918 had given them extensive powers over the life of the units and thus steered them on a collision course with the commissars.<sup>63</sup> Over the summer several meetings were held, including one in the Khodynka army camp in July, where opinion divided evenly over whether the cells were to be subordinate to the military commissariats and commissars, or to retain extensive prerogatives.<sup>64</sup> With the development of the political department as the political organiser in the army the TsK at the end of August 1918 warned the local party organisations against interfering in the work of military political bodies, especially in the appointment of commissars.<sup>65</sup> The attempts of the cells to control the units, and thus the commissars, were further restricted by the TsK decree of 25 October 1918 and their tasks were defined as essentially agitational. At the same time the decree forbade any party organisations, committees, groups, or any independent party

62. Schapiro, p.242; Petrov (1964), pp.49-51. In October 1918 the RVSR formed its own political department for the fronts, which in November 1918 was fused with the Bureau of Military Commissars' own political department, which is the one Moscow dealt with, Petrov (1964), pp.56-7.

63. Erickson, pp.43-4.

64. Petrov (1964), p.60.

65. p, 19 August 1918. Although command appointments had been centralised in April 1918 commissars in the units of the Moscow garrison had still been appointed in some cases by the RKs directly, some by the Bureau of Commissars, and some by the MVO. Of 14 commissars appointed in summer 1918 5 had been designated by the RKs, 4 by the MVO (whose commissar was E.M. Yaroslavskii), and 5 by the Bureau, though all had to be confirmed by the Bureau, Petrov (1961), p.51.

institutions in the army.<sup>66</sup> In this way party committees as such were abolished in the army and the army cells in the rear became part of the local party organisation.

The precise rights of the local organisations still remained undefined and the MK on 11 November 1918 called for a general instruction on the rights of the cells in the army. In response in early January 1919 the TSK issued an instruction which finally subordinated the cells to the commissars and restricted their functions to agitation and carrying out the party line. By the terms of the instruction the political departments were the general party organiser at the fronts and the local party organisations in the rear.<sup>67</sup> It was at this time, it will be recalled, that the rights of the cells in the factories began to be limited; conventional militarisation in the army was accompanied by limitations to cell rights in industry. In the army, the ground was cut away from beneath the development of autonomous party organisations, the continuation of pre-revolutionary forms in the post-revolutionary situation, in what Trotsky (and Sokol'nikov) called 'army syndicalism'.

On the eve of the VIII party congress opposition gathered to the use of specialists, the elimination of electability, and the overbearing behaviour of commissars. A general meeting of communists in Basmannyi raion on 16 December 1918 protested against the repression against party activists at the front and criticised the development of 'boss-like' relations (nachal'nichestvo).<sup>68</sup> Other meetings, such as one in Gorodskoi

66. Perepiska, vol.IV, p.74.

67. P, 10 January 1919.

68. P, 19 December 1918.

raion on 19 December, criticised the use of specialists.<sup>69</sup> The MK itself supported the rapid deployment of red commanders to replace the bourgeois specialists.<sup>70</sup> The call for a proletarian-based army and communist officer corps was supported by the 14 March 1919 city party conference in a resolution which urged the rapid transition to a militia system to ensure the 'class character' of the army.<sup>71</sup> Opposition to the use of the military specialists and authoritarian methods of organising the Red Army therefore found strong support in Moscow.

This opposition came to a head at the VIII party congress. A grouping led by such ex-Left Communists as Yaroslavskii, Sapronov, and V.M. Smirnov formed a 'military opposition', whose ranks included the future MK secretary Myasnikov, Zemlyachka, with Stalin playing a shadowy role motivated by hostility to Trotsky. The opposition criticised the use of the old specialists and called for greater collegiality in the army with respect to the conduct of party work. Smirnov attacked the development of political departments and argued for greater autonomy for the communist commissars.<sup>72</sup> In calling both for greater powers for the commissars and for the cells (and thus for the local party organisations) the opposition argument contained contradiction. In the event Lenin's calls for a centralised conventional army using the specialists<sup>73</sup> won the day

69. P, 24 December 1918.

70. VIMS, 25 February 1919. The XII Moscow guberniya party conference on 3 March 1919 passed a similar resolution but protested in sharper tones against 'repression against communists', P, 7 March 1919.

71. P, 16 March 1919.

72. VIII s"ezd RKP, pp.158-9.

73. ibid., p.20.

- but only just.<sup>74</sup> The party programme adopted by the congress rejected the idea of a militia army in the short term. The powers of the political departments under the commissars' bureau were transferred to one under the RVSR to conduct all party and political work in the army at the fronts while the local party organisations were responsible for the rear.<sup>75</sup> Osinskii summed up the mood of the congress by arguing that 'We shall for a long time to come have to practice military-command forms of the proletarian dictatorship'.<sup>76</sup>

In 1918 the cultural and educational departments of the raion military commissariats had played the key role in party and educational work in the army. The MK's main contribution had been the organisation of a temporary party organisation in the Khodynka army summer camp.<sup>77</sup> In early 1919 the raion commissariats were abolished<sup>78</sup> and party work was transferred to the RKs in the localities and to the city war commissariat (Gorvoenkom) in the centre.<sup>79</sup> An MK instruction of 11 January 1919 had already called for the formation of party cells in the garrison as part of the MPO and now every RK formed a military commission to organise the army communists.<sup>80</sup>

74. ibid., p.273.

75. ibid., p.421; Petrov (1964), p.73. In May 1919 the political department was transferred to PUR, ibid., p.89.

76. VIII s"ezd RKP, p.190.

77. Petrov (1964), p.31.

78. VIMS, 4 April 1919.

79. Otchet voennogo otdela, p.3. The Gorvoenkom had been formed in March 1918 as the successor to the Red Guard headquarters and was the closest that the Moscow soviet came to having a military department, P, 11 May 1919.

80. P, 18 May 1919.

The VIII congress's call for party work in the rear to be conducted by the local party organisations was achieved finally in Moscow by the formation at the end of April 1919 of a permanent military department under the MK, headed at first by Myasnikov.<sup>81</sup> Its functions were defined by the 3 May 1919 city party conference, which also defeated a resolution proposed by supporters of the Military Opposition.<sup>82</sup> Its main aim, according to Myasnikov, was to raise the political level of the army to be achieved by the strict subordination of the unit cells to the RKs.<sup>83</sup>

The creation of the MK military department signalled the MK's assertiveness in claiming its role in the army and was part of the programme of ensuring party influence in it. At the same time it only increased the confusion between respective responsibilities and added to the bitterness in the conflicts between the military and civil authorities. An attempt to coordinate the work of the various bodies was the creation of a 'council of five' (pyaterka) in mid-1919. It contained representatives of the MK military department, the Gorvoenkom political education department, PUR RVSR, the political department of the MVO (PUOKR), and the supreme military inspectorate. The body was designed to concentrate all political work in the Moscow garrison by eliminating parallelism by centralised direction. This organisation tried to bridge the civil and military authorities, but it failed to harmonise their relations and by

81. P, 6 May 1919.                      82. Ocherki ist. MO KPSS, vol.2, p.122.

83. Otchet voennogo otdela, pp.19-20; KM, cols. 671-2; P, 6 May 1919.

July 1919 this hybrid body had disappeared.<sup>84</sup>

Within the army itself there were conflicts between the political commissars (behind the shoulders of the 'spetsy'), and the responsible party workers (APWs) and the cells themselves. Conflicts between them rose in nearly every unit of the Moscow garrison. Lines of military and party discipline here became confused. For Trotsky, undoubtedly, the army commissar was senior to the others, though not always to the specialist, as a matter of military discipline. The MK insisted, however, that even the commissars were units of the party hierarchy and therefore subordinate to it.<sup>85</sup>

This was the main thrust of an instruction adopted by a conference of army cell representatives on 17 August 1919. It recognised that the political education of the army was the central task facing the MK, but that it could not undertake this task on its own resources alone. Therefore, it required the help of the commissars themselves. They should not only be commanders, but also political educators. On the basis of these considerations the MK military department reiterated that within the city and guberniya all Red Army party members were subordinate to the MPO regardless of the post they might hold. Thus the MK hoped to extend its authority over the political commissars.<sup>86</sup>

The instruction emphasised that 'The communist party does not know and cannot know privileged members'. This applied

84. Otchet voennogo otdela, p.5.

85. ibid., p.9. By the end of 1919 there were about 6000 commissars, 1430 of whom were in the rear, Petrov (1964), pp.94-5. In principle the commissars were not part of the party hierarchy.

86. ibid., p.9.

equally to the commanders as to the rank and file: 'Among many of the administrators there are many examples of laxity and complete disregard for party work'. The commissar was to regard the cell as the key to improving the effectiveness of the Red Army. Any conflicts between them were to be taken to a higher party body, not to administrative authorities.<sup>87</sup> Apparently this instruction helped to decrease the number of conflicts between commissars and cells. Later, the MK admitted that the attempt to run political work in the army through the commissars (i.e., the political departments) had been unsuccessful.<sup>88</sup>

The statute commission under Dzerzhinskii reporting to the VIII conference attempted to regulate the relationship by insisting that the heads of the political departments should join the local party organisation, though the military authorities were to retain their autonomy.<sup>89</sup> A TsK circular of 17 October 1919 stressed once again that every party member (including presumably commissars) was to have 'close links' with the local party organisations.<sup>90</sup> A division of responsibilities therefore seems to have taken place whereby the LPO was responsible for the organisation of communists and some agitprop work in the barracks, but final responsibility for the military assignment of communists lay with the political departments.<sup>91</sup>

87. ibid., p.10.

88. ibid., p.11.

89. VIII. konf. RKP, pp.232-3.

90. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 7, 22 October 1919.

91. PUR was able to exert enormous control over party life in the army by its control over transfers. Between April and November 1920 alone, for instance, it assigned over 24,000 communists, Izvestiya TsK RKP, 29, 7 March 1921.



An MK instruction of January 1920 stressed that its military department was not an autonomous organisation but strictly subordinate to the MK as a whole. Its collegium consisted of two representatives of the MK and one from the Gorvoenkom. At the same time military departments were formed under the RKs.<sup>92</sup> Although party work in the city was now carried out by the military department, Pyatnitskii reported to the MK on 29 March 1920 that the relationship between the army political departments and the MK's department were still unclear.<sup>93</sup> In May 1920 the TsK repeated the injunction that responsibility for party work in the rear lay with the LPOs.

Besides the conflicts mentioned above over the role of the commissars there was the further problem of departmental prerogatives as each institution and department in the army tried to gain as much authority as possible. The party cells in them took a similar path. An example of this revival of 'army syndicalism', albeit in a 'localist' guise, was the attempt of the party cell in the MVO commissariat headquarters to take control over all the cells in the garrison. The MK military department rebuffed this attempt to institute a parallel chain of authority.<sup>94</sup>

The unresolved conflict between the commissars and the party organisations continued throughout 1920. By the end of 1920, with the political department model being extended to spheres beyond the army (e.g., Tsektran) the local organisations fought hard to retain control over all the communists in their area. In

92. P, 25 January 1920.

93. KT, 30 March 1920

94. Otchet voennogo otdela, p.5.

October 1920, for example, the MK once again stressed that any conflicts between the commissars and the cells were to be taken to the higher party instance: 'The commissar must above all be a communist, not to stand over the cell but to guide and lead its work as a senior comrade among equal members'.<sup>95</sup> In January 1921 the MK military department was abolished and the Red Army cells were integrated into the raion party organisations.<sup>96</sup> By early 1921 the army communist was subordinate politically to the LPO, and between the military and party authorities a balance had been established. The calls for a militia army, led by Podvoiskii, were proposed as a way of integrating civil and military authority.

### 3. Political education in the Red Army

The organisation of party work in the army was aimed at both raising the military commitment of communists themselves and at raising the consciousness of the mass of the soldiers in the army. The development of the civil war revealed severe shortcomings in the steadfastness of the army, leading for example to the fall of Simbirsk in July 1918 and a series of reverses in early autumn 1918. The reasons for the first failure were stated by the TsK at the end of July 1918: not only was it a consequence of the youth and the lack of training of the soldiers, but more importantly it was due to the lack of agitation in the localities - the soldiers did not understand what they were fighting for.<sup>97</sup>

95. Otchet MK za oktyabr' 1920g., p.35.

96. KT, 18 February 1921.

97. Perepiska, vol.III, pp.127-9.

As Schapiro points out , Trotsky's insistence on complete centralisation and iron discipline was directed not only towards the military specialists but also at compelling the peasants, who had so recently stripped themselves of their uniforms, to don them once again.<sup>98</sup> At one stage in 1919 the number of deserters almost equalled the combat strength of the Red Army.<sup>99</sup> The increasing peasant composition of the army undermined its ability to deal with peasant disturbances, and correspondingly enhanced the role of communist cadres both as commissars and in the ranks.

The majority of communists in the army units were peasant youths, 'village types, not conscious, less influenced by the spirit of communism than the proletarian masses'.<sup>100</sup> The largest influx of them was in the second half of 1919, notably during the party week, and in early 1920. The cells and commissars were faced with this great mass of, from their point of view, politically illiterate people. Hence the importance of party work in the army, and the insistence by the MK that communists mobilised into the army should form cells in their units if none existed already.

The creation of the MK military department allowed the development of systematic agitprop and political work in the army. The number of party schools in the units increased from a mere 4, all in Basmannyi raion, in June 1919 to a peak of 58 in February 1920. On average in this period cells met just over

98. Schapiro, p.240. By the second half of 1918 the Red Army had changed from a primarily working class body to a predominantly peasant levy. In 1919 two-thirds of the army was peasant, and in August 1920 they constituted 77.4% of the army while workers comprised 14.9%, Izmeneniya sots. struktury, p.314.

99. Erickson (1962), p.78.

100. P, 11 November 1919.

twice a month. Between June 1919 and August 1920 there were an average of 616 meetings a month, 422 lectures, and 766 discussional gatherings (sobesedy) attended by about a quarter of a million soldiers a month. Over the same period there were 21 non-party Red Army conferences, 18 of which were held in January and February alone, attended by a total of 18,700 delegates.<sup>101</sup>

The non-party conferences in the city from late 1919 were used as platforms for criticism of the government, and this probably explains the steep decline in the numbers held. At the end of the year they were revived in the guise simply of Red Army conferences. By mid-1920 the signs of discontent in the Moscow garrison were clear (Chapter 10). Nevertheless, the MK in September 1920 presented an optimistic picture of the political situation in the barracks. It accepted that conditions were very hard, with a lack of warm clothing and food, and that this was used by 'counter-revolutionary propaganda'. The commissars were still often isolated from party work in the cells, and there were many cells that were isolated from the soldiers. Despite this, the report stated, the communists still retained their dominance over the soldiers.<sup>102</sup> This would appear to be an over-sanguine description of the situation. The 6 Red Army (non-party) conferences in October 1920, attended by 2500 delegates, revealed that the soldiers were 'dissatisfied with military and civil "bureaucratism" and the arbitrariness of the local authorities'.<sup>103</sup>

101. Otchet voennogo otdela, appendix.

102. Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., pp.23-4.

103. Otchet MK za oktyabr' 1920g., p.35.

Once again the report states that this grumbling was not 'tainted with counter-revolution'. Nevertheless, the authorities were worried enough to organise a series of emergency meetings of commissars, political organisers, and cell secretaries, and to draft in more activists for the MK military department. Attempts were made to improve the conditions of the soldiers (Chapter 10). These measures, together with punitive ones, were sufficient to contain the crisis and the Moscow garrison played little part in the disturbances of early 1921.

#### 4. Special purpose communist detachments (ChON)

While the induction of communists to military life took a traditional path in the army, in the rear it was no less intense but in an original form. The TsK urged that all communists should be taught military skills:

We must awaken in the very widest circles an interest and love for military matters. Friedrich Engels, already half a century ago, learnt military affairs, foreseeing that its knowledge would be essential for the task of liberating the working class.<sup>104</sup>

The specific instrument for this were the special communist detachments (chasti osobogo naznacheniya - ChON, known by various names up to April 1919), the irregular territorial militia organisation of communists and Komsomol members.

The ChON grew out of the voluntary detachments of communists formed in the first months after October 1917 and lasted up to 1924. While the Red Guard was a more fissiparous organisation, with limited tasks and a weak organisational structure, the ChON, not yet exclusively made up of party members, from the first

104. TsK circular letter of 14 July 1919, Perepiska, vol.VIII, p.148.

played the role of the armed force of the revolution and a solid reserve for the red Army. They were the first forces to march against the German advance in March 1918 in the absence of a strong enough conventional army. At the same time the MK organised forces for combatting counter-revolution in Moscow by arming all party members and established compulsory controls in the raions.<sup>105</sup>

The basis for the formation of purely communist detachments was laid with the TsK directive of March 1918 on the arming and training of communists. With the threat of another German advance and the country in an ever-increasing state of lawlessness, with widespread banditry on the streets of Moscow, discontent and disturbances in the factories and increased agitation by anarchists and various anti-Bolshevik tendencies, the Soviet government required reliable forces at its disposal. The process therefore began whereby the party became not only the abstract source of authority but was also physically organised to combat disorder through the militarisation of every party member in the communist detachments. As part of the same process political opponents were rendered not only outcasts in the political sphere but criminals as well.

On 8 May 1918 the TsK once again demanded that all party members should immediately start military training. They were required to present a certificate to their organisation attesting that they had taken a military training

105. S.M. Tel'nov, 'Boevye kommunisticheskie otryady osobogo naznacheniya v bor'be s kontrrevolyutsiei (1918 god)', Istoriya KPSS, Uch. zap. MOPI im. Krupskoi, vol.215, issue 13, M. 1968, p.190.

course.<sup>106</sup> The directive laid the foundations for communists to become commanders in the conventional army, and for the special communist detachments to defend enterprises, carry out patrols, and so on.

Communist detachments were formed in all the major proletarian centres of Russia. They were considered an autonomous part of the Red Army subordinate to the local party committee and not the military commissariats. In the cities they were sometimes used in conjunction with the Cheka forces. At first the units had no clear organisational disposition and little military efficiency, lacking competent commanders, arms and a clear command structure. They were formed as a specific response to immediate dangers, and in lieu of any other large military organisation, apart from the Cheka, they were considered essential for defending the government in the cities. However, neither the communist detachments, nor the Cheka forces, played a significant role in suppressing the LSR uprising in Moscow in early July 1918.<sup>107</sup> In future, it was to be the troops placed at the disposal of the Cheka with the communist detachments as auxiliaries that were to be responsible for domestic control. The LSR uprising did however lead to changes being made in the organisation of ChON detachments. A new plan was adopted by the MK on 26 July with more accurate accounting, better organisation and training. All raions were to compile lists of communists

106. Iz istorii grazhdanskoi voiny, vol.1, p.127.

107. During the uprising the main military force was a group of Latvian soldiers. In the raions, however, communists were under arms guarding the party and state buildings, and arrested the local LSR leaders and raion committees, Tel'nov, p.190.

able to fight, both experienced soldiers and raw candidates.<sup>108</sup> Already on 20 July 1918 the Lefortovo RK, for example, had issued a decree calling for the immediate registration of communists in armed detachments, which were to be under the strict control of the party committees. Failure to register meant expulsion from the party.<sup>109</sup> The 30 July 1918 city party conference, which authorised the first party mobilisations for the fronts, also emphasised the suppression of counter-revolution in the rear. A headquarters for the Moscow units was found, headed by a political commission of Zagorskii, Myasnikov and Pyatnitskii.<sup>110</sup>

By autumn 1918 some of these units had been launched en masse to the fronts. Zagorskii and the MK bureau insisted that the units should be broken up and distributed throughout the army to give backbone to Red Army units rather than concentrating them in groups which could easily be destroyed.<sup>111</sup> Their view prevailed and communist units, as far as possible, were restricted to a rear role.

On 17 April 1919 the TsK passed a resolution which officially founded the ChON,<sup>112</sup> and instructions on their formation were sent to all party organisations.<sup>113</sup> They were formed on a militia territorial basis, composed exclusively of party members, and under direct party control. They were formed under factory, raion, and city party committees, initially exclusively of communists who had joined the party before the revolution, and

108. Tel'nov, p.191.

109. P, 20 July 1918.

110. P, 2 August 1918.

111. 23 September 1918, Perepiska, vol.IV, p.273.

112. P, 23 April 1919.

113. Perepiska, vol.VII, pp.40-2, 94.



other communists on the recommendation of the RK. In July 1919 these restrictions were lifted in the face of overwhelming military need. The TsK report of July 1919 stated that in principle all party members capable of carrying a gun were to enlist.<sup>114</sup> Each raion was to form a battalion of chonovtsy of not less than 216 men, directly subordinate to the head of Moscow ChON, with 4 hours a week of training.<sup>115</sup> By mid-1919 there were 12 ChON detachments in the city with 7814 members, about half of the total membership of the organisation. By the summer of that year 3700 of these were considered capable of carrying out military tasks.<sup>116</sup>

At the VIII party conference in December 1919 Bukharin stressed that all communists, above all those recruited during the party weeks, should participate in the ChON:

All this creates of our party a military organisation, although military organisation and a military structure of our party has been noted throughout the course of the revolution. Until we overcome the critical phase this will become more and more marked.<sup>117</sup>

The structure of the Bolshevik party was particularly suited to the waging of war, whether on the fronts or in the streets. The idea was to have a totally dependable force that could be relied on in any crisis, a political fire brigade. The role of the ChON was enhanced by the 10 December 1918 SNK decree prohibiting the keeping of arms at home with the exception of communists.<sup>118</sup> The

114. Perepiska, vol.VIII, pp.98-9.

115. Ocherki ist. MO KPSS, p.343.

116. K.I. Bukov, V bitve velikoi, M. 1960, p.113.

117. VIII konf. RKP, p.165.

118. Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti, vol.4, M. 1968, pp.196-200.

units were given such tasks as the protection of the soviets, the RKs, and other key points in the raions. On disturbed days they patrolled the streets, conducted raids (oblavy), searches and arrests of 'speculators and counter-revolutionaries'.<sup>119</sup>

Every party committee was required to appoint an instructor responsible for them. V.M. Smirnov (and then Yanushevskii) held overall responsibility under the TsK secretariat. The initial instructions were strengthened in May 1919 when certain irregularities came to light. Time spent for training in ChON had been used as a way of avoiding work, so the instruction insisted that training should only take place in free time. Membership in ChON could not serve as an excuse to avoid being drafted into the army. Expulsion from ChON meant expulsion from the party.<sup>120</sup>

The circular insisted that the ChON should not be used at the fronts as complete units, echoing Zagorskii's warning in September 1918, but only individuals drafted from them. However, the disastrous military situation from mid-1919 forced their wholesale use against Denikin and Yudenich in the autumn.<sup>121</sup> At the critical moment in the defence of Petrograd 500 chonovtsy were rapidly despatched to the North. These units gradually came to resemble regular units, especially since they were supplied with weapons from the military supply departments.<sup>122</sup>

The inadequacies of the ChON were often criticised. A

119. Manievich, p.171.

120. 8 May 1919 TsK circular, Perepiska, vol.VII, p.94.

121. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 5, 20 September 1919.

122. KM, cols.663-4.

delegate meeting of Basmannyi raion in March 1920, for instance, heard of many defects in their work.<sup>123</sup> A special commission at the end of summer 1920 investigated the reason why the ChON were not used to combat the peat and forest fires during the drought months. The MK bureau insisted on their greater accountability to itself, an insistence that extended to the MK military department itself.<sup>124</sup>

The increasingly tense atmosphere in the city in autumn 1920 led to more attention being paid to the ChON. A call went out at the end of September for all communists and candidates, irrespective of their jobs, to be divided into companies for training.<sup>125</sup> At the same time the MK announced that the 1920 reregistration had shown that in some places up to 60% of communists did not participate in the units, and that every mobilisation revealed their lack of discipline. From 10 October, the MK announced, military training would be compulsory,<sup>126</sup> and a few days later the MK RKSM announced that all Komsomol members were also to join the ChON.<sup>127</sup> The ChON were to take an active part in suppressing the disturbances of early 1921.

123. KT, 25 March 1920.

124. KT, 3 September 1920.

125. KT, 29 September 1920.

126. KT, 30 September 1920; P, 30 September 1920; Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., pp.50-1.

127. KT, 1 October 1920.

5. ChON and universal military training (Vseobuch)

The confirmation by VTsIK on 22 April 1918 of the decree on universal military training of workers was an important step towards erasing the distinction between the army and labour. In spring 1918 universal military training (Vseobuch) was introduced in the cities, though it suffered lacked of experienced personnel and resources. By the autumn most worker Muscovites were involved in military training.<sup>128</sup> At the same time, the war at the fronts became an extension of the civil war in the rear as the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the attempt to end commodity production were intensified. The system of Vseobuch, in introducing the population to military service, broke down the barriers to the use of the Red Army apparatus for labour mobilisation. In late 1920 it was appraised as follows:

Vseobuch is the antechamber of a militia army. At present we need a Red Army, but the existence side by side with it of Vseobuch is an indicator of what we will do when the civil war ends - form a militia army. We are now preparing for it by the training of workers and peasants. Therefore Vseobuch is the seed of the future army. Vseobuch militarises the workers while not separating them from their jobs, not secreting them in barracks. It teaches not only adult workers but also children, developing in them an interest in sport, games, drawing, <sup>129</sup> them gradually into the conditions of military life.

One of the main charges levelled against ChON was that it divided communist military training from mass training, and thus weakened the latter. Vseobuch had developed in a haphazard way in response to the military dangers facing the country. For various reasons it was a politically weak organisation as far as the Bolsheviks were concerned, and their dominance in it was not

128. Aleshchenko (1976), p.133.

129. KM, col.664.

assured. This reflected the development of Vseobuch indeed as the germ of the militia army, of the armed nation, and this was a large part of the reason for the creation of the ChON as separate military organisations under the party committees, and not under state bodies.

In November 1919 the ChON were incorporated into the Vseobuch system by decree of the RVSR. The aim was to strengthen Vseobuch by reinforcement with party members and instructors. The ChON nevertheless retained their independence as an armed corps of party members. In a sense the ChON became the party fraction of Vseobuch, the party core directing the non-party mass. By early 1920 the merger was complete. Vseobuch turned into a body under the military commissariat in the military sense, and under the party in the political sense.<sup>130</sup> On 4 May 1920 the MK adopted a series of measures to improve party work in the Terbrigady (the units of Vseobuch).<sup>131</sup> Moscow ChON and the ChON brigade leaders became subordinate to the Terbrigady, but at the same time were appointed by the MK and RKs. For a period in early 1920 the ChON lost their identity in Vseobuch, against the expectations of the November 1919 decree. Now communists were not being given any special military instruction since the communist in Vseobuch had the same status as the ordinary non-party trainee. They were badly armed and trained, and suffered heavy losses when sent to the fronts.<sup>132</sup>

The ChON, however, did not disappear. At the end of 1920 their political significance rose as they were committed to the

130. KM, col.665.      131. Iz ist. grazh. voyny, vol.3, p.184.

132. V.L. Kratov, Chonovtsy, M. 1974, p.23.

peasant uprisings in Tambov and elsewhere, and later against the widespread 'banditry' in the countryside and disorders in the city. Large numbers of demobilised communists were absorbed in them. From late 1920 and at the X party congress their organisation was debated, and on 9 July 1921 they were formally separated from Vseobuch.<sup>133</sup> On 26 September 1921 the TsK adopted a new ChON regulation which instituted an ordered system of call-up in order to ensure that the ChON did not interfere with recruitment to the Red Army or the Cheka.<sup>134</sup>

#### 6. The militia system

Throughout the civil war a muted discussion had continued over the balance to be struck between a regular army and the possibility of a transition to a militia system. While the war continued the partisans of a regular army had the upper hand, but with the end of wide-scale military action the question of the transition to the militia system became more pressing. The debate was not simply between militarisers and demilitarisers: in a perverse way, those in favour of a militia system, like Trotsky, were precisely the most ardent advocates of militarisation.

The militia camp was split, and they were opposed by defenders of a regular army organised on traditional professional lines separate from civil society. To the supporters of what could be called the 'soft' militarisers such as Podvoiskii the militia system represented the adherence to revolutionary principles of 1917 and expressed the repugnance of Marxists for a

133. Kratov, p.68.

134 ibid., p.71.

standing army. For them the militia system would be based on the system of Vseobuch organised on a territorial basis in the territorial brigades (Terbrigady) and in this way the split between the army and labour could be avoided.<sup>135</sup>

For Trotsky the militia system was to form the basis for the militarisation of labour. While previously exhorting strict labour discipline, as he did at the 24 September 1919 city party conference, and military methods, above all on the railways, by the end of 1919 he came to the conclusion that if war communism was to continue (and in February 1920 he put forward some mild proposals for a tax in kind but was outvoted by 11 to 4 by the TsK),<sup>136</sup> then general militarisation was the only solution to the most pressing economic problems. With Kolchak, Yudenich and Denikin repulsed, at the end of 1919 Trotsky outlined his plans at the XVI guberniya party conference (23 November 1919):

I believe that if we can soon end most of our fronts we will have at our disposal an apparatus of universal labour duty. In May 1918 we hesitated if we could mobilise 10,000 workers. Now we can mobilise millions of workers and peasants. This is part of our general soviet apparatus. We will liquidate the war, go over to Vseobuch, and the military apparatus will be available for the economic needs of the country... Victories at the front prepare the ground for victories in the fields of culture, the economy and management.<sup>137</sup>

In the absence of the European revolution and the decimation of the working class and the old layer of underground fighters<sup>138</sup> the methods that had proved themselves in war were to be applied to the home fronts. At the VII congress of soviets in December

135. P, 20 May 1920.

136. Szamuely, p.71.

137. XVI Mosk. gubpartkonf., pp.46-7.

138. ibid., pp.24-44.

1919 he put forward concrete proposals for the extension of the militia system based on Vseobuch,<sup>139</sup> and the IX congress, despite some reservations, agreed to the transition.<sup>140</sup> The congress was followed by the vigorous application of labour duty (Chapter 3) as the distinction between the army and labour was blurred. By November 1920 Trotsky's militarisation plans were extended to the statisation of the trade unions, provoking the TU debate.

The opponents of the militia system, such as Tukhachevskii and Smilga, considered that it would destroy an effective armed force for the soviet republic and submerge workers in a sea of peasants. The meeting of the RVSR on 16 December 1920 marked the point when the militia system was largely rejected under war communism. As Lenin had said a few days earlier at the VIII soviet congress, a reliable force was required in case of further attacks.<sup>141</sup> In the event it was not so much external attacks that were the priority at the time, but a regular force was required to maintain internal order as in Tambov and Kronstadt.

It was in this context that the MK passed a resolution, clearly influenced by Smilga's views, urging extreme caution in implementing the militia system.<sup>142</sup> It pointed out that the numerical smallness of the industrial proletariat made its hegemony over the Terbrigady problematic. As we have seen the Vseobuch system had been 'politically weak' in Moscow, the largest proletarian centre in the country, and this fact obviously increased the MK's doubts about a militia system.

139. Erickson 1962, p.49.

140. KPSS v rez. i resh., pp.176-8.

141. Lenin PSS, vol.42. p.131.

142. Erickson 1962, p.119.



Nevertheless, the MK compromised by allowing some limited experimentation with militia units in industrial areas.

It was this view that Danilov on behalf of the MK put forward on the militia question at the V Moscow guberniya party conference (19-21 February 1921). The transition should be 'cautious and gradual', he insisted.<sup>143</sup> Against this Podvoiskii called for the rapid transformation of the Red Army into a militia army. The conference and the MPO decisively rejected any extension of militarisation by voting 249 to Podvoiskii's 14 (with 65 abstentions) against the militia system as an immediate priority.<sup>144</sup> This is how the X party congress formulated the question, and the limited experimentation allowed was not taken up by Moscow and only Petrograd availed itself of the chance.<sup>145</sup> Only in 1923 was a militia-based system introduced for the Red Army.<sup>146</sup>

143. He rehearsed the usual arguments against the militia system: that hostilities might once again break out with the Entente powers; that territorial units had performed much worse than regular units in the war; meant that the Red Army should increasingly act as a school for young workers and peasants; and that Vseobuch should only act as a preparatory course for the army, V Mosk. gubpartkonf., pp.3-4.

144. ibid., pp.3-4.

145. Erickson 1962, p.125.

146. For a full discussion of the militia versus regular army debate see John Erickson, 'Some Military and Political Aspects of the "Militia Army" Controversy 1919-1920', in Essays in Honour of E.H. Carr, Macmillan 1974, pp.204-28.

## 7. 'Revolutionary justice' in Moscow

The civil war was fought both at the fronts and in rear. The economic offensive against the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a re-evaluation of the concept of justice in which class principles became the measure of innocence and guilt. Powerful punitive organisations developed to lead the struggle against the residues of capitalism in both the economic and political spheres. It was only under NEP that the system of revolutionary tribunals and popular courts gave way to a more ordered system of civil courts, while the Cheka emerged as a powerful element in the post war Soviet state.

### a. The people's courts

The liquidation of the old judicial apparatus took place in Moscow in December 1917, a month after Petrograd.<sup>147</sup> It was replaced by a system of what were called local courts (mestnye sudy), envisaged by the SNK decree of 24 November 1917. By July 1918 they had received the appellation of people's courts (narodnyi sud) and a VTsIK decree of 30 November 1918 finally formed a single national people's court organisation. A court in Moscow usually consisted of one permanent judge and 2-6 temporary judges, at first elected by soviets and workers, and from mid-1919 by the raion soviets alone.<sup>148</sup>

The people's courts were devoted mainly to regulating relations between citizens, and not with political offences which were the preserve of the revolutionary tribunals. In 1918 these

147. Izmeneniya sots. struktury, p.312.

148. VIMS, 18 July 1919.

courts heard 4700 cases: in the first half of the year a third of the cases were civil and the rest criminal, and in the second half of the year criminal cases rose sharply to four-fifths.<sup>149</sup>

b. The revolutionary tribunals

The Moscow revolutionary tribunal was formed on 21 December 1917 with an investigation department with three sub-departments: criminal and crimes at work; speculation; and a political department. In mid-1918 a fourth department for specially important cases was formed. In May 1918 a collegium of three prosecutors was established.<sup>150</sup> In its first case the Moscow tribunal sentenced the editor of the 'bourgeois' paper Utro Rossii to two months in gaol.<sup>151</sup> Up to the end of July 1918 a total of 2022 cases had been started by the four departments: 453 involving speculation, 907 criminal, 430 political, and 132 special. 740 cases had been transferred to other institutions.<sup>152</sup> By the end of 1918 most of the political cases originated with the Cheka.<sup>153</sup>

The revolutionary tribunals were given more powers to deal with counter-revolution in April 1919<sup>154</sup> in an attempt to curb the Cheka. However, as Peters, the chairman of the Moscow

149. VIMS, 7 May 1919. The most common punishment was a fine, applied in 57% of the cases. Prison sentences were imposed in 21.5% of the cases, followed by partial deprivation of liberty in 14%, and then by the confiscation of property, VIMS, 17 April 1919.

150. VIMS, 29 July 1918.

151. Bol'shevik, 22 January 1918.

152. VIMS, 29 July 1918.

153. VIMS, 30 November 1918.

154. VIMS, 11 April 1919.

tribunal at the time, told the Moscow soviet EC on 31 May 1919, the Vecheka was reluctant to transfer its cases from its own investigation department to the tribunal. The session called for a speed-up in the investigation of those arrested.<sup>155</sup> The tribunal judged 154 cases between 10 April and 10 May 1919: 18 were sentenced to be shot, and other sentences ranged from public warnings to 15 years hard labour with deprivation of civil rights (17 people).<sup>156</sup> Its increased political role was reflected in the numbers sentenced to death. In the period between 10 March and 15 September 1919 a total of 638 people in 243 cases were dealt with. There were 33 cases involving counter-revolution involving 69 people, of whom 4 were shot. The largest number of people sentenced to death was for theft on the railways (16) which was the single largest category of offences (108 people). A total of 80 people were shot in this period,<sup>157</sup> and another 189 were shot on its orders in 1920.<sup>158</sup> The revolutionary tribunals were under the jurisdiction of the Moscow soviet (and the Commissariat of Justice) and hence a degree of supervision was possible. The same could not be said of the Cheka.

c. The Cheka

According to M.N. Pokrovskii the formation of the Vecheka on 20 December 1917 'flowed out of the very nature of the October

155. VIMS, 2 June 1919.

156. Stenotchety MS, 17, 1919, pp.262-4.

157. Stenotchety MS, 21, 1919, p.326.

158. G.P. Maximoff, The Guillotine at Work, vol.1, The Leninist Counter-Revolution, Cienfuegos Press, Orkney 1979, p.142.

revolution'.<sup>159</sup> However, as Pokrovskii admitted, there was a difference between this body and the revolutionary tribunals of popular justice mooted by party activists in the heat of victory in November 1917, and demanded in March-April 1918, which were to be courts elected by workers of a given raion.<sup>160</sup> The same principle of revolutionary justice took very different organisational forms in terms of control and accountability. It was this contradiction between the idea of revolutionary justice, to which few communists objected, and the Cheka as an armed force largely beyond accountability, which from the first proved unpopular in Moscow.

In early March 1918 a Moscow Cheka was formed by the Moscow soviet EC,<sup>161</sup> and in principle it carried out the police tasks previously carried out by the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee. With the removal of the central government to Moscow on 10 March 1918, and with it the Vecheka, the two bodies were united on 19 March, and the staff of the MChK joined the larger body. In principle the Vecheka was now subordinate not only to the SNK but also to the Moscow soviet EC.<sup>162</sup> A party fraction (and not cell as it should have been) was formed in the Vecheka at the end of April 1918 which united 250 communists out of the reported 750 Vecheka employees of the time,<sup>163</sup> an indication of the high proportion of communists on its staff.

159. M.N. Pokrovskii, Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya, M. 1929, p.399, from P, 18 December 1927.

160. ibid., p.399.

161. MChK - iz istorii Moskovskoi cherezvychainnoi kommissii 1918-1921gg.: dokumenty, M. 1978, p.5.

162. loc.cit.

163. P, 7 July 1918.

The first major act of the unified Cheka was the assault on the anarchists on the night of 11-12 April 1918. The incident revealed the disparity between the attitude of the party activists newly arrived from Petrograd and the Muscovites. As Peters wrote in 1924: 'In Moscow in general at that time there was a peaceful mood, and the Moscow military commissariat even issued arms to the anarchist headquarters', and further: 'The Muscovites basically did not welcome the Cheka'.<sup>164</sup> The position was worsened by the fact that the Vecheka shot many of the anarchists without consulting the Moscow soviet. As Latsis commented later:

Nowadays this seems amazing, but at that time there were not a few comrades...for whom the principle of the inviolability of the individual was placed higher than the interests of the revolution...<sup>165</sup>

While giving a report to the Moscow soviet in early summer 1918 Peters was greeted by shouts of okhrannik (an employee of the Tsarist police).<sup>166</sup>

Following the LSR uprising in July 1918 the mood became less compromising. The assassinations of Volodarskii, Uritskii, and Zalevskii, and the attempted assassination of Lenin by the SR Dora Kaplan outside the Mikhel'son plant on 30 August 1918 led to widespread calls for a red terror. Militant resolutions were passed by the majority of the RPOs, and the city conference on 31 August called for the mass suppression of the bourgeoisie and its

164. Ya. Kh. Peters, "Vospominaniya o rabote VChK v pervyi god revolyutsii", PR, 10(33), 1924, pp.8-9. On the Moscow anarchists see Avrich, Russian Anarchists, p.184.

165. M. Latsis, 'Tov. Dzerzhinskii i VChK', PR, 9(56), 1926, p.86.

166. Peters, p.11.

agents.<sup>167</sup> The MK tried to restrain some of the more violent proposals, and argued that the specific measures proposed by a general meeting in Basmannyi raion on 5 September should be adopted. These argued that action should be taken against bourgeois property, that the bourgeoisie should be expelled from Moscow, that concentration camps should be formed, and so on, stopping short of physical liquidation. These proposals were acted on.<sup>168</sup> An inter-raion party meeting on 9 September 1918 heard that the clearing of Moscow of non-labouring elements was proceeding successfully with few 'excesses'. Houses were being 'purged' of the bourgeoisie and workers and their families were moving into them.<sup>169</sup>

However, the initiative in the red terror moved from the party and soviet organisations to the raion Chekas and took on a more bloody aspect. The formation of the local Chekas had begun in August 1918, but now the process was accelerated.<sup>170</sup> A special raion Cheka supervisory body was set up after the assassinations headed by Ya.M. Yurovskii. By November 1918 the Moscow soviet felt that the city needed its own Cheka if only to maintain control over the local Chekas, and in early December 1918 a city Cheka (MChK) began its work headed by Dzerzhinskii and a collegium with B.A. Breslav, Yurovskii, V.N. Mantsev (the deputy head of the Vecheka) and S.A. Messing. A guberniya Cheka

167. P, 1 September 1918.      168. P, 13 September 1918.

169. P, 13 September 1918. There is a description of the resettlement in Boris Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago.

170. P, 14 September 1918.

was also formed.<sup>171</sup> The Vecheka became a controlling body over the local Chekas, though it still handled the most important cases.

Concern over the lack of party direction over the raion Chekas was voiced by the general meeting of Gorodskoi RPO on 19 September 1918. The meeting urged that more party members should join the Cheka to ensure control, and that the local Chekas should give frequent reports to party meetings.<sup>172</sup> The raion Chekas, on the other hand, were keen for communists to join them but only in an auxiliary capacity, as the Zamoskvorech'e raion Cheka implied when it asked the RK to form communist detachments to help in raids and searches.<sup>173</sup> The MK session on 5 October insisted that the raion Chekas were to be strictly controlled by the RKs. Every RK was to form a control commission to ensure that arrests were carried out correctly.<sup>174</sup> In Moscow the red terror had been envisaged as a further stage in the economic expropriation of the bourgeoisie, but under the direction of the raion Chekas it had turned into a campaign for their physical liquidation as well. By the end of the year this had stimulated a growing movement aimed at restraining the Cheka. In the pages of Moscow's evening paper the Cheka was lambasted for the enthusiasm with which it imposed the death penalty.<sup>175</sup>

171. MChK, p.5; P, 4 December 1918. With Dzerzhinskii frequently absent from the city his responsibilities devolved to such Moscow communist Chekists as Breslav (to April 1919), Mantsev (April-December 1919), Messing (the head of the MChK from mid-1920 to November 1921), and I.S. Unshlikht (head of MChK from November 1921).

172. P, 22 September 1918.

173. P, 27 September 1918.

174. P, 6 October 1918.

175. VIMS, 10, 11 October 1918.



The Cheka was criticised for attempting to put itself above the local soviets and state organs, especially the NKVD and the Commissariat of Justice. The NKVD insisted that the Cheka was not an autonomous organisation.<sup>176</sup> In response to an article praising violence in the *Vecheka* journal, censured by the VTsIK on 25 October 1918, a commission was formed of Kurskii, Kamenev and Stalin to investigate the role of the Cheka. A second commission consisting of representatives of the Moscow soviet, the Commissariat of Justice, the NKVD, and the Cheka under the chairmanship of Sverdlov was established to regulate the relations between the *Vecheka* (central and local) and state organs.<sup>177</sup>

Many party members had profound misgivings over the practice of the Cheka, and they were expressed by Bukharin and Ol'minskii in Pravda in late 1918. They sought to restrain the Cheka and to restore some forms of legality under the party and the soviets.<sup>178</sup> In Moscow one of the first results was the abolition of the raion Chekas, which had distinguished themselves by the ferocity with which they had prosecuted the red terror, in January 1919.<sup>179</sup> Some of their functions were transferred to the raion militias which were militarised by a VTsIK decree of 3 April 1919.<sup>180</sup> At times of emergency political bureaux (troiki) were formed in the raions, as mentioned above, to strengthen the Chekist apparatus in the city.<sup>181</sup>

The MK and Kamenev personally were in the forefront of the

176. VIMS, 14 October 1918.

177. VIMS, 26 October 1918.

178. Leggett, pp.117-8.

179. Leggett, p.137.

180. Leggett, p.152.

181. MChK, p.6.

campaign to bind the Cheka in some forms of legality by giving greater powers to the revolutionary tribunals. At a meeting on 23 January 1919 of the Moscow revolutionary tribunal, whose chairman at the time was D'yakonov, with representatives of the MK and Cheka (Peters, Latsis) proposed a series of measures<sup>182</sup> which were codified by an MK resolution of 27 January, forwarded to the TsK. It called for sentencing to be removed from the Cheka and transferred to the tribunals (under the Commissariat of Justice). They were to be strengthened by inducting more party members into them, and the Cheka was to be left with criminal investigation alone.<sup>183</sup> On 21 February 1919 the critics of the Cheka achieved a victory by the publication of a decree, prefigured by a similar resolution passed by the Moscow soviet EC on 17 February, which implemented the MK's recommendations and transferred sentencing rights to the tribunals and generally restricted the rights of the Cheka.<sup>184</sup> A few days later Peters explained the changes to the Moscow Soviet plenum. He claimed that in the 15 months of its existence the Cheka nationally had shot 3200 people for all offences. Now, he argued, the drive against counter-revolution would be led by the revolutionary tribunals, while the Cheka would move to tackle the main problem facing soviet power - the battle against banditry and enemies in institutions, bribery and other economic crimes.<sup>185</sup>

For a brief period this division of responsibilities held and the MChK concentrated on criminal offences (the VChK dealt with the major political cases), though as mentioned the city

182. Leggett, p.141.

183. P, 30 January 1919.

184. Leggett, p.145.

185. P, 26 February 1919.

Cheka was still reluctant to transfer cases to the revolutionary tribunal. However, the intensification of the civil war in mid-1919, and with increased disturbances and 'plots' in the city, the MChK's involvement in political cases increased.<sup>186</sup> This was confirmed by the formation at the end of May 1919 of a general coordinating body to integrate the work of the VChK, MChK, MK RKP, and the NKVD. Party control was to be exerted by the MK's representation on this body, and by the wide network of cells in the Cheka.<sup>187</sup> The MPO was a major source of personnel for the MChK and donated its most committed and uncompromising members. At a time of particularly acute crisis in May 1920, for example, a draft of party workers was sent to help the MChK.<sup>188</sup>

Between 1 December 1918 and 1 November 1920 59 'counter-revolutionary' plots were allegedly discovered in Moscow. Of the 5140 people arrested in connection with these 52 were officially announced as having been shot.<sup>189</sup> Over the same

186. There appears to have been a broad amount of overlap in personnel between the MChK and the revolutionary tribunal, the notable case being Peters, therefore the division between the two organisations should not be exaggerated. The shift in the political work of the MChK can be seen from the following figures. In the first 4 months of its existence (January-April 1919) the MChK dealt with 429 political (anti-counter-revolutionary) cases, 18% of its total; by May-July this had risen to 35% of its work (1139 cases); August-October 1689 (30%); and November-December 1919 1027 (32%). Between May-July 1919 1151 (38%) of its cases were criminal, which fell to 14% of its work between August-November 1919. KM, cols.629-30.

187. MChK, p.10. The relationship between the party and Cheka is discussed in Leggett, Ch.VIII.

188. KT, 9 May 1920.

189. KM, col.631. In the first 6 months of 1920 alone Messing, the chairman of the MChK, reported that 5 major 'counter-revolutionary' organisations had been discovered, including an anarchist underground, the 'Union of Polish Engineers' accused of sending secrets and Polish officers to Poland, the Italian group

period 2644 were arrested for criminal offences, above all for 'banditry' and of the 369 shot 338 fell in this category.<sup>190</sup>

The Cheka during the civil war became an important factor in the labour process and in general an important actor in the political life of the city. The MK pointed out one aspect of this at its meeting of 11 January 1919 when it called on the Cheka to establish supervision over the specialists both at the front and in the rear.<sup>191</sup> A note from Lenin on 27 January 1920 called on the MChK to provide 'a responsible, experienced party investigator to look into the completely unsatisfactory state of labour duty in Moscow, both in regards to workers and employees'.<sup>192</sup>

By far the largest effort of the MChK went into the battle against speculation and job-associated crimes (cf. Chapter 2). A decree of 21 October 1919 formed a special commission under the Cheka to fight speculation and the Sukharevka.<sup>193</sup> Out of the 39,721 people arrested between 1 December 1918 and 1 November 1920 in the city 26,692 (67.2%) were accused of speculation (17,870 had been arrested by the Sukharevka department alone) and 53 were shot for this.<sup>194</sup> Over the same period 5249 (13.2%) were arrested for labour crimes, of whom 104 were shot (47 for taking

of Maketti involved in spying, and an international group of 'stock exchange speculators', KT, 10 October 1920.

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190. KM, col.633. The Cheka often used the term banditry to cover political offences, but to what extent cannot be quantified.

191. P, 18 January 1919. 192. Lenin PSS, vol.54. pp.424-5.

193. Dekrety, vol.6, pp.217-8. 194. KM, col.631.

bribes and related offences, 47 for labour desertion, and 8 for theft).<sup>195</sup>

According to the above figures the MChK shot 578 people over the given period and arrested 39,721, 5.8% of the population over 20 years old. In the first 7 months of 1919 234 people had been shot by the MChK,<sup>196</sup> and according to Messing 131 were shot in the first 9 months of 1920, 87 alone since the beginning of military action against Poland and the introduction of martial law in Moscow.<sup>197</sup> Of those arrested about two-thirds were released. For instance, out of 17,426 arrested in the first 6 months of 1920 11,344 (65.1%) were released.<sup>198</sup> In the first 9 months of 1920 1401 people were admitted to have been incarcerated in concentration camps, 19 in gaol, 755 sent for public work, 2976 sent to enterprises accused of labour desertion, and 1399 to juvenile commissions.<sup>199</sup>

195. KM, col.632. Between 16 February and 1 March 1920 alone the MChK arrested 182 people for speculation and labour crimes, of whom 108 were subsequently released. The main offences were theft of ration coupons and pilfering from supply stores, KT, 20 March 1920.

196. Maximoff, p.111.

197. KT, 10 October 1920. With the onset of what turned out to be only a brief lull in the war the government on 17 January 1920 passed a decree abolishing the death penalty. However, on the eve of this coming into effect, on 18 or 19 January, the Cheka in Moscow and elsewhere summarily executed large numbers of prisoners thus presenting the government with a fait accompli. In Moscow 2-300 were shot and are not included in the above figures (Serge, p.99). The tragedy is described by Maximoff, pp.113, 119-22.

198. KT, 10 October 1920.

199. KT, 10 October 1920. The treatment of juveniles in Moscow's gaols was the subject of a special survey, it is not stated by whom, in February 1920, despite the opposition of the Vecheka. It revealed a picture of overcrowding among the 305 youngsters incarcerated at that time, with several to each bed

The Cheka was particularly active during the disturbances from the end of 1920 and was a potent factor in the terms of debates. In November 1920, for instance, the MChK sent 3 people to prison for five years apiece for 'spreading provocative rumours subverting the authority of Soviet power'. The MChK vowed that it would 'deal mercilessly' with all counter-revolutionaries who spread panic and rumours which could be used by enemies of the republic.<sup>200</sup> At the same time as a prophylactic measure in view of the widespread rumours of an impending uprising in the city, the MChK called for all privately held arms in the city to be handed in, and allowed an amnesty if this was done before 15 January 1921<sup>201</sup> (in December 1918 the holding of arms at home had been made illegal).

With the end of the war a campaign began to restore control

and with nothing to occupy them except, as the report stated, to learn criminal mores from their seniors. Many were detained on suspicion alone. Others had been given two or three-year sentences for stealing a belt or 1.5 funta (615 gms) of sugar, while some had been sentenced to 15 years hard labour. Instead of a preponderance of bourgeois children, as claimed by the Cheka, only 2% were from this category, while the majority came from poor worker homes. The decree stating that juveniles were not to be treated as criminals was at this time due to be suspended (P, 12 February 1920).

Speaking to Emma Goldman after the publication of this report Lunacharskii denied Soviet responsibility for the imprisonment of children: 'Of course, it is all barbarous and antiquated and I am fighting it tooth and nail. The sponsors of prison for children are old criminal jurists still imbued with Tsarist methods...Of course, these children must not be punished' (Goldman, Disillusionment, p.41).

The sole inspection by Rabkrin of 38 places of detention in Moscow in April 1920 recommended the release of 3074 prisoners, 42% of the total number incarcerated (7312 people's cases had been checked, 43% of whom had been committed to gaol by the Cheka) (Leggett, p.156).

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200. KT, 9 November 1920.

201. KT, 17 December 1920.

over the Cheka. An article in April 1921 argued that while terror had required strong centralisation run by the hardest of men this had led to lack of control and bureaucratism: 'The negative aspects appeared particularly strong in periods when the civil war quietened and with the lack of military work the steadfastness [of Cheka workers] weakened'. The article called for the extension of the Narsud system.<sup>202</sup> In the event, the Cheka, despite reorganisations, escaped significant reforms.

Emma Goldman gives a vivid portrait of the outward manifestations of militarisation in Moscow. On her arrival in the city in early 1920 she noted that there were soldiers and Chekists everywhere. No less an observer than John Reed described the atmosphere in the city to her at the time:

Moscow is a military encampment: spies everywhere, the bureaucracy most autocratic. I always feel relieved when I get out of Moscow. But then, Petrograd is a proletarian city and is permeated with the spirit of the revolution. Moscow<sup>203</sup> always was more hierarchical. It is much more so now.

The decision to fight the war in 1918 using traditional authoritarian structures, despite the urging of the Left Communists to fight, if not a people's war, a revolutionary one,

202. The article was signed by a group of Muscovites: Anikst, Bergman, Belarusov, D'yakonov, Ovsyannikov, Vasil'ev, and others, KT, 13 April 1921.

203. Goldman, Disillusionment, p.32. Esther Corey, an American communist, arrived in Moscow in 1919: 'Military men in motor cars were dashing recklessly through the streets. Limousines bearing soviet dignitaries and rickety carriages pulled by boney horses raised a clattering symphony on the cobbles...There was a certain amount of barter on the Sukharevka market, but this was a dangerous undertaking. Many a Russian lost his life after a Cheka raid on the market', Esther Corey, 'Passage to Russia', Survey, 53, October 1964, pp.28, 31.

inevitably influenced the future course of communist construction. The elimination of discussion and dissent in the army was extended to the rest of society through the Cheka and other punitive organisations. Responsibility for the beginning of the war lies beyond the scope of this work, but once launched 'The Bolsheviks could only tailor their organisational structures to the demands of survival (i.e., rigid, authoritarian centralisation) rather than to popular attitudes and aspirations'.<sup>204</sup> A powerful political-military machine came into being during the war but no corresponding effective mechanisms to ensure control over it.

204. John Ellis, Armies in Revolution, Croom Helm, London 1973, p.199.



## CHAPTER 7

### Agitprop and Mass Organisations

One of the most important aspects of the work of the party committees during the civil war was agitation and propaganda among various sections of Moscow's population. There were two main forms of this activity. The first consisted of general agitprop through meetings and the press designed to popularise the party's policies. The second form was the creation of special bodies, such as the Komsomol, national minorities' organisation, and women's departments, to instil the party spirit (partiinnost') in the target group.

#### 1. Organisation and functions of agitprop

##### a. Agitprop departments and general agitprop work

The MK formed an agitation bureau on 7 May 1918 and called on all the raion party organisations to refer to it for agitators and lecturers.<sup>1</sup> This was the first step in the creation of a powerful apparatus designed not only to propagandise Bolshevik policies but also to ensure a degree of mobilisation of the city's population through attendance at agitational meetings. Gradually each RK formed its own agitprop department. In Butyrskii raion, for example, one was established on 14 September 1918.<sup>2</sup>

The most important form of agitation was the meeting of various sorts. It was during the civil war that ideological work began to be measured in crude statistical terms. Party reports

1. P, 11 May 1918.

2. P, 5 January 1919.

were often dominated by lists of meetings held and the number of people attending. By any scale, however, these results by 1919 were statistically impressive. Between 3-19 October 1919 alone, for instance, 1235 meetings were held in the city attended by over a quarter of a million people.<sup>3</sup> Admittedly, this was the period of the party weeks, but throughout dozens of meetings were held each week.<sup>4</sup> Many of these meetings were held in working time and were thus assured of an audience. When the hooter sounded in the middle of a meeting of 2000 workers in the Kursk railway workshops on 28 May 1920, for example, over half of the audience melted away.<sup>5</sup> The sheer scale of the MPO's agitprop effort reflects the 'heroic' nature of the period as one major event followed another, but it was clearly difficult to maintain a high level of mobilisation for months on end. To compensate for this much of the agitprop work took the form of shock campaigns organised in the form of 'weeks' over issues or for sections of the population. In December 1919 there was a 'week of red youth', in August 1920 a 'week of the female peasant' and a 'week of pre-conscription training', in September 1920 a 'week

3. P, 26 October 1919.

4. The scale of the agitprop work of the MK military department has already been mentioned. 440 meetings and lectures, for instance, were held in Sokol'nicheskii raion in the first half of 1919 alone (P, 26 July 1919). The mass scale of agitation in the city can be seen from the figures for July 1920. The 2060 meetings were attended by nearly three quarters of a million people. On average in that month there were 76 meetings a day ranging from small ones of about 50 to mass meetings in the open air. The topics reflected current concerns: the Polish war, economic objectives and especially the campaign to bring in firewood, and the II Comintern congress held in that month, Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., p.14.

5. KT, 2 June 1920

of strengthening the party', and so on, not to mention the party weeks themselves.

A more permanent form of agitprop was the factory and raion clubs organised by RKs, TUs, and factory committees. They were designed to be primarily educative as opposed to recreational, and as such were often criticised by those attending. By July 1920 193 clubs had been registered as involved in this sort of agitprop work.<sup>6</sup> With the increased emphasis on economic reconstruction at the end of the civil war a special campaign of 'production propaganda' was developed and in September 1920 a special MK sub-department was formed for this under the agitprop department.<sup>7</sup> Production propaganda groups were formed in the largest factories, and by the end of 1920, for example, there were 31 such groups in Sokol'nicheskii raion.<sup>8</sup> As part of the campaign production conferences of workers and managers were held to discuss economic questions. Six of these had been held in the above raion by the end of 1920.<sup>9</sup> This brief survey of the MPO's agitprop work would not be complete without a mention of the party press, which in Lenin's conception acted as 'a collective agitator and propagandist'.<sup>10</sup>

6. Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., p.11.

7. Otchet MK za oktyabr' 1920g., p.4.

8. Desyat' let: Sbornik materialov Yu.O.K. Sokol'nicheskogo raiona k 10-letiyu oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii, M. 1927, p.6.

9. KT, 19, 21 December 1920.

10. The major Moscow paper was the TsK Pravda. In 1917 and early 1918 the main local Moscow paper was Sotsial-demokrat. In March 1918 with the government's move to Moscow this was merged with the central Pravda and the paper became the organ of both the TsK and the MK and was briefly known as Moskovskaya pravda, and then simply as Pravda. The Moscow soviet's morning Izvestiya had

While the MPO's ideological work was impressive in statistical terms, its effectiveness is less convincing. At the VIII party congress Sosnovskii berated the abstract nature of the MK's propaganda effort: 'Today Wilson, tomorrow Wilson, the day after tomorrow Wilson, while the Menshevik's talk about supplies, internal disorders within factories, etc.,'.<sup>11</sup> The Lefortovo RK's report for April 1919 complained about the limited influence of their agitprop: 'Our work does not so much encompass new layers of the proletariat as regulates, directs, and broadens the work of already established organisations'.<sup>12</sup> Increasingly the accent was placed on the agitational functions of the cells, as mentioned. In May 1919 the Sushchevsko-Mar'inskii RK stated the problem. They were dealing with 'raw human material, Red Army soldiers arriving straight from the countryside into the towns...unhappy with requisitioning...and backward workers who have had little taste of political life'. The RK insisted that more cells had to be formed to supplement the 42 that existed, 18 of which were in factories and 16 in the Red Army with 773 members, in order to overcome this 'cultural backwardness'. To conduct this work the raion had only 3-4 agitators at its disposal.<sup>13</sup> At the IX party congress Kamenev was still calling

become a weekly by mid-1918 and was discontinued on the grounds of the paper shortage by an SNK decree of 28 April 1919 (Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti, vol.5, p.549). General information in Moscow was provided by the soviet's evening paper. In March 1920 it was decided that Moscow should have its own morning paper and so Kommunisticheskii trud was launched.

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11. VIII s"ezd RKP, p.174.

12. P, 5 May 1919.

13. P, 18 May 1919.

for agitprop to become less theoretical,<sup>14</sup> though he could have called for it to become more efficient. There were frequent cases when speakers arrived late at meetings, or failed to turn up at all.<sup>15</sup>

The question of 'cultural backwardness' was particularly acute in respect to religious observance. Despite the attempts to inculcate the materialist view of history and politics the widespread persistence of religious faith in the city is well-documented, and was even influential within the party. An incident that aroused particularly severe censure took place in the giant Danilovskii mill. As we have seen the party cell here was only formed in December 1918 to serve the 7000 workers, mainly women. During the winter of 1919-20 the factory committee, composed largely of communists, repeatedly asked for the water supply to be overhauled but no action had been taken. When in April 1920 up to 50 people a week were dying of dysentery a priest was called in and over 3000 of the workers attended.<sup>16</sup> As the propaganda increasingly spoke of the imminence of communism, in the factories socialism receded as the workers entered the illegal economy to survive and lacked a 'conscious approach to labour'.<sup>17</sup> Under the pressure of the collapse of effective public life apart from through bureaucratic channels workers were returning to earlier forms of solidarity such as

14. IX s"ezd RKP, p.309.

15. Eg., a speaker assigned by the MK agitprop department failed to show up at a meeting in Sokol'nicheskii raion in November 1920, KT, 6 November 1920.

16. P, 16 January 1919; KT, 24 April 1920.

17. KT, 22 April 1920.

mutual self-help organisations (kassy vzaimopomoshchi).<sup>18</sup>

The strength of religious adherence in Moscow is confirmed by Marguerite Harrison, who reported packed churches and generous material support for priests, who no longer received obligatory tithes.<sup>19</sup> The frequent debates over religion held in the city attracted large audiences. At these, leading communists, often Lunacharskii, took the floor against church luminaries. At one of these 'disputes' in mid-September 1920 Lunacharskii was confronted by Bishop Antonin before a packed audience in the Polytechnical Museum. The audience split evenly in the vote.<sup>20</sup>

In the party the MGK in mid-1919 had resolved that 'a religious world view is totally incompatible with the materialist tendency endowed to us by the founders of scientific socialism'. Any communist observing religious practices was threatened with punishment.<sup>21</sup> Despite such warnings a meeting of raion secretaries and agitprop activists in mid-April 1920 noted that communists were still being married in church and their children baptised. The meeting adopted an uncompromising line on the question: either the party or the church.<sup>22</sup> There was a steady stream of expulsions for infringements of this rule.<sup>23</sup> The attitude of the communist to religion became yet another test of loyalty to the party.

18. KT, 24 April 1920.

19. Harrison, Marooned, p.133.

20. KT, 28 September 1920.

21. Vestnik propagandy, 3, 1919, pp.21-2.

22. KT, 17 April 1920.

23. E.g., 2 were expelled in March 1920 for attending services (KT, 31 March 1920). 28 were expelled during the August 1920 reregistration for religious observance.

At the end of 1920 a debate arose over the concentration of all agitprop and educational work under Glavpolitprosvet, the body formed in November 1920 under Narkompros, and nominally headed by Krupskaya.<sup>24</sup> While Myasnikov at the IX party conference had argued for the consolidation of all party agitation and schools in this body<sup>25</sup> this did not take place owing to the fear that the party's own agitprop effort would be undermined. The party agitprop departments retained their autonomy and the party schools remained subordinate to them. The discussion over the respective roles of Glavpolitprosvet and the party agitprop departments continued into 1921.<sup>26</sup> At the V guberniya party conference in February 1921 Yakovleva, the MK rapporteur on the issue, stated that 'We have not achieved major successes on the political education front' or in the 'communisation' of cultural and educational institutions. The conference resolved that the party ought to keep its own agitprop departments, and accepted Preobrazhenskii's guidelines on the question which argued that it was premature to transfer in its entirety agitprop work from the party to Glavpolitprosvet.<sup>27</sup>

24. On Glavpolitprosvet see Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Commissariat of Enlightenment, CUP 1970, Ch.8.

25. IX konf. RKP, p.133.

26. The MK in January 1921 admitted that it had not decided its position on the question. At the 11 January 1921 MK plenum Litkens, Minkov, Boguslavskii, and Burovtsev for the Ignatovtsy were commissioned to work out a set of theses on the issue (KT, 15 January 1921). Work nevertheless went ahead on the consolidation of the guberniya's political education authorities into Glavpolitprosvet, KT, 18 February 1921.

27. V Mosk. gubpartkonf., p.18.

b. Non-party conferences

The non-party conferences were first organised at the end of 1918, and were widely practiced from early 1919. About a dozen were held every month in Moscow aimed at target groups in the population such as workers, women, or soldiers. Between April - October 1919 there were 75 of these conferences,<sup>28</sup> in March 1920 11, and in October, including the guberniya, 18.<sup>29</sup> Overall in autumn 1920 the frequency of the conferences decreased since they provided a ready forum for criticism of Bolshevik policies. The non-party conference was designed mainly as a specific instrument of agitprop and recruitment to the party.<sup>30</sup> Workplaces or army units would elect delegates to them, and these would then report back to their electors. Some of the conferences were very large, such as one of the first organised by Presnenskii RK on 14-16 December 1918. About 1400 participated and heard Lenin give the keynote speech on the war.<sup>31</sup> Other conferences restricted themselves to a specific group, such as one in February 1919 which was designed to attract 'new layers of workers'.<sup>32</sup>

The conferences often became the scene of bitter struggles for dominance. The very name 'non-party' laid the Bolsheviks open to the charge that their party's role in them infringed the very basis of the conferences. At the non-party conference in Zamoskvorech'e raion (18-23 September 1919), for instance, the Bolsheviks barely retained control. The call for only genuinely

28. Myasnikov, izb.proiz., p.233.

29. KM, col.661.

30. IX s"ezd RKP, p.37.

31. Lenin PSS, vol.37, pp.370-83.

32. P, 23 April 1919.



non-party people to be elected to the presidium met with strong support.<sup>33</sup> Myasnikov both at the time and in late 1920 admitted that the conferences often began in a mood of some hostility to the Bolsheviks, but insisted that by careful organisation and if the agenda was restricted to one or two carefully prepared topics majorities could be achieved: 'Step by step the conference is disciplined, pulled up, pricks up its ears, and finally, a complete turnaround takes place and ends with the complete victory of our party'. But still, one had to be careful because 'The slightest organisational slip-up spoils the whole thing'.<sup>34</sup>

He recommended that the words 'non-party' be dropped from the title, and this began to be done from late 1920. During the disturbances from late 1920 they provided an effective platform for criticism of Bolshevik policies, and they were discredited as a form of agitprop work.<sup>35</sup> Soon after they were discontinued.

### c. Subbotniks

The communist subbotniks (unpaid Saturday work) were a more general form of agitation which linked the idea of labour and the communist system. In September 1919 the MK issued the following proclamation appraising the subbotniks:

The basic condition of any system of production is labour...Capitalist production with us has now been

33. Myasnikov, Izb.proiz., p.243.      34. KM, cols.659-60.

35. Maximoff, pp.154-5. Lenin admitted the breach between the party and the non-party workers at the X party congress: 'When non-party meetings were held in Moscow it was clear that out of democracy and freedom they forged a slogan leading to the overthrow of Soviet power' (Lenin PSS, vol.43, p.31), and in the draft of his pamphlet on the tax in kind he wrote that the conferences were used by counter-revolution - 'Caveant consules!' (Let the consuls be vigilant), Lenin PSS, vol.43, p.384.

superseded. We must now create a new production system. For this we require work, labour, but not the old capitalist labour which is not suitable for the new relations, but a higher, more conscious, more productive labour. The organisation of communist production needs communist labour.

Communist labour, the proclamation stated, has its own 'revolutionary discipline':

Under communism the results of labour and its rewards become anonymous, and therefore it does not require individual recompense.

The proclamation went on to compare the subbotniks to the departure of the workers in Thomas Campanella's City of the Sun, accompanied by music and dancing and imbued with the life-giving properties of the joy of labour.<sup>36</sup>

Lenin's view of the subbotnik movement shared some of this idealism but also insisted on their practical functions. In his pamphlet issued soon after the first subbotnik he called them the 'beginning of communism',<sup>37</sup> and at the 20 December 1919 Moscow city party conference he argued that they were the first sign of communism '...when unpaid work for the general good becomes a universal phenomenon'.<sup>38</sup> On the more practical side, at the VIII party conference in November 1919 Lenin stressed the agitprop functions of the subbotniks and not the glimpse that they gave of the future society. They were to be used as schools, he argued, to attract workers and reliable elements of other classes to the party.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, they were, as Lenin put it in his earlier pamphlet, a means of 'purging the party'.<sup>40</sup> Bubnov took

36. KM, cols.661-2.

37. 'Velikii pochin', Lenin PSS, vol.39, p.25.

38. Lenin PSS, vol.40, p.34.

39. VIII konf. RKP, p.24.

40. Lenin PSS, vol.39.

up this theme when he argued that they were 'one of the most genuine means of continuously increasing the discipline, strength, steadfastness, and indissolubility of the party ranks'.<sup>41</sup> The subbotniks, in other words, were a crucial means of educating and disciplining the party members themselves.<sup>42</sup>

The first subbotnik took place at the Sortirovochnaya station on the Moscow-Kazan line on 12 April 1919 at the instigation of the chairman of the communist cell. Thirteen communists and 2 sympathisers continued to work without wages after the end of the normal Saturday shift into the night. On 10 May there was a special communist subbotnik when 102 communists from the MPO's railway raion took part. The work was largely confined to transport, essential factory maintenance, and to cleaning up the city after the winter snows.<sup>43</sup> Between May-December 1919 402 subbotniks were organised in the city in which 50,121 people participated, 63.7% of whom were communists.<sup>44</sup> In May 1919 all the 724 people participating in subbotniks were communists, but by December of that year their presence represented less than half (46% or 7623) of the 16,673 participants.<sup>45</sup> On average a little under 2000 communists participated in each, about 10% of

41. P, 28 August 1919.

42. The voskresniks (unpaid Sunday work) had the added significance of acting as an anti-religious demonstration. This aspect was underlined by the organisation of a voskresnik on Easter Sunday 1920 in Basmannyi raion, the seat of the Patriarchate of the Orthodox church, P, 16 April 1920.

43. Kommunisticheskie subbotniki v Moskve i Moskovskoi gubernii v 1919-1920gg.: dokumenty i materialy, M. 1950, p.7.

44. ibid., p.341; KM, cols.663, 693-4; Tri goda diktatury proletariata, M. 1921, p.28.

45. P, 24 December 1919.

total party membership.

In 1920 the subbotniks developed as a mass phenomenon. Over a million people took part in over 3000 subbotniks (2748 to August), a quarter of whom were communists, an average of 21,400 communists a month. The percentage of women participating steadily increased to reach about a quarter in late 1920. About a third of the participants in each subbotnik were soldiers. Average participation in each subbotnik in 1919 was 45 non-party people and 79 communists (64% communists), and in the first 8 months of 1920 272 non-party and 93 communists (25%).<sup>46</sup>

The subbotniks were not allowed to develop as an autonomous movement. The party soon issued organisational guidelines, and in May 1919 the MK formed a subbotnik bureau under the MK secretary Zagorskii. At the end of August 1919 the bureau was consolidated with the brief to organise and to keep statistics on them.<sup>47</sup> The MK instruction on the subbotniks of September 1919 insisted that it was obligatory for communists to take part.<sup>48</sup> Factories wishing to draw on the supply of unpaid labour had to notify the bureau about the type of work envisaged and the numbers required, and the workers were then distributed through the RKs. A factory could only organise a subbotnik with the permission of the RK subbotnik bureau.<sup>49</sup> At the end of November

46. As in note 44, plus KT, 4, 8, 9 May, 8 July, 12 August, 7 September, 9 October, 12 November, 5 December 1920; Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g. p.15; Otchet MK za oktyabr' 1920g., pp.30-1. The figures exclude the 1 May 1920 mass subbotnik in which 425,769 Muscovites took part, 4.3% of whom were communists, 38% women, and 8.2% Red Army, P, 9, 20 May 1920.

47. KM, col.662.

48. P, 12 September 1919.

49. KM, col.689.

1919 the MK and RK subbotnik bureaux were reorganised into departments, each led by an experienced activist,<sup>50</sup> and detailed instructions on their work were issued in December 1919.<sup>51</sup> Every party cell was to appoint a subbotnik organiser to ensure by their personal example that non-party workers would be drawn into the movement. Communists were to take part in at least two subbotniks a month, and failure to comply was threatened with punishment up to expulsion from the party.<sup>52</sup>

The subbotniks were cited as solid evidence of the party's links with the working class and that communists were not a privileged class shut away in offices. Hence the emphasis that there were to be no exceptions to participation, however important a post the communist might hold. They were therefore an element in the struggle against bureaucratism and a lever for the party committees to exert over those of their members working in state posts. An example of this was the refusal of the railway RK to grant exemptions to some administrators in the Vecheka's transport department who asked to be relieved of subbotnik duty in July 1919. The RK argued that the whole point of the subbotniks was to involve party members working in administrative posts and to ensure that they did not lose contact with the working class. Only a minute number of the 15% of the raion's membership who were employed in responsible posts had been excused, and any more, the RK argued, would lead to demoralisation and accusations of privileges. Absence from subbotniks, it warned, would be treated as a breach of party

50. P, 25 November 1919.

51. P, 27 December 1919.

52. KM, col.690.

disciple.<sup>53</sup> The coercive aspect of subbotnik participation, especially as far as party members were concerned, increasingly negated their inspirational character, and over this, as we shall see, a debate developed at the end of 1920.

## 2. The Communist Youth League (Komsomol)

The organisation of the youth league illustrates the development of the party's relationship with mass bodies and shows how theoretical positions were given organisational expression. The final form that this achieved, as a single party-dominated exclusive youth organisation, became the model for later communist youth organisations. On the practical level the importance of an organisation of youth for the Bolsheviks stemmed from the large numbers employed in industry, and the need to prepare reserves for the party. The value of the organisation increased as mature workers were drafted elsewhere and were replaced by youths and women. Already in April 1918, when the demobilisation had led to the return of some of the mature workers to industry, the census had shown that in Moscow 52,237 youths under 25 were employed in factory industry, 33.2% of the industrial proletariat in the city. 17% of all workers were between 15 and 19 years old.<sup>54</sup>

The first youth groups began to be organised in Moscow in spring 1917 by all the socialist parties. They were a continuation of the tradition of various kinds of circles (kruzhki) that ante-dated the February revolution. One

53. Perepiska, vol.VIII, pp.618-9.

54. Statistika truda, 11-12, 1918, pp.23-4; Yunyi kommunar, 46, 4 June 1921, p.10.

of the most active was the Bolshevik-inspired internationalist group in Zamoskvorech'e called 'III International'. It aimed to be a broad body with an appeal for all of working class youth and was not affiliated to any one party. By the summer similar groups had been formed in all of Moscow's raions.

A debate developed in the MPO about its relationship to these groups. At the end of May 1917 the MK twice discussed the question, and against Krupskaya's advice<sup>55</sup> decided to form an organisation consisting solely of young Bolsheviks under the MK, as opposed to concentrating on working within the existing broad organisations. At the VI party congress in August 1917, however, the MK approach was rejected and it was resolved that Bolshevik influence among youth would be better advanced if the party and youth groups were to remain organisationally separate.<sup>56</sup>

The MK youth group was nevertheless formed but was overshadowed by the 'III International' organisation. By autumn 1917 the latter had become dominant in the city, and on 8 October 1917 at the I Moscow city youth conference the MK youth union dissolved itself into the larger body, now called the Union of Young Workers, which lasted in name up to November 1918.<sup>57</sup> In practice this body largely disintegrated during the period of the Brest peace, losing a large part of its membership to the voluntary military detachments formed to fight the Germans. Others resigned in opposition to the peace.<sup>58</sup> The MK of this

55. P, 30 May 1917.

56. VI s"ezd RKP, p.267.

57. Za chetyre goda, M. 1922, p.17.

58. Efim Tseitlin in, Pyat' let. Iz istorii Moskovskoi organizatsii RKSM, M. 1922, pp.23-5.

union dissolved and the remnants of the organisation were absorbed by Proletkult.<sup>59</sup>

The nature of the party's relationship with the youth organisation and the influence of Proletkult ideas were the dominant themes during the civil war. The founding congress of the Russian Communist League of Youth (RKSM) (29 October - 4 November 1918) was the scene of heated exchanges over these questions.<sup>60</sup> The influence of the Proletkult movement was reflected in the key congress resolution insisting on the independence of the league from the RKP, though allowed that it should work under its 'guidance'.<sup>61</sup> Opposed interpretations of this resolution were to lie at the centre of a debate in the Moscow youth and party organisations which continued into 1920. While the party stressed that the union, though independent, was a school where 'new conscious communists are formed',<sup>62</sup> and a

59. ibid., p.30; P, 30 July 1918. Proletkult was organised by A.A. Bogdanov and P.I. Lebedev-Polyanskii in September 1917, and was formed in Moscow at a conference held on 23-8 February 1918. The conference passed a resolution calling for the formation of a 'special, purely mass organisation' (i.e., independent of the party). A long struggle ensued to ensure party control over Moscow Proletkult which was not fully successful until the abolition of Proletkult autonomy by its fusion with Narkompros in December 1920, Aleshchenko (1976), pp.209-12.

60. The congress was attended by 176 delegates, 30 of whom were from Moscow, ostensibly representing 22,100 members. 88 were communists, 45 called themselves non-party and were not sympathetic to the RKP, 35 were Soviet sympathisers, and 3 were Social-Democrats, 2 were SRs, and 1 an anarchist, Ocherki istorii Moskovskoi organizatsii VLKSM, M. 1976, p.75; Za chetyre goda, p.21.

61. I s"ezd RKSM, 29 oktyabr' - 4 noyabr' 1918: protokoly, M. 1934, p.5.

62. TsK circular letter, November 1918, Perepiska, vol.V, p.34.



reserve for the party,<sup>63</sup> a group in the RKSM based in Moscow stressed the internal autonomy and mass nature of Komsomol. Their views were incorporated in the programme adopted by the I congress, insisting that youth was 'the most revolutionary part of the working class'.<sup>64</sup>

Following the congress the Moscow Komsomol organisation began to reorganise itself. The 17 November 1918 city youth conference decided that the MK RKSM would consist of three representatives from each raion, a system similar to that of the MK RKP. Hitherto affairs had been run on a very informal democratic basis by simple meetings of the activists in each raion.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the union's close ties with Proletkult played havoc with these attempts at tightening organisation: 'Proletkult in practice dominated the league and killed its internal life'.<sup>66</sup> In early 1919 a group of Komsomol workers in the MK and TsK RKSM, including V. Dunaevskii, Polifem, and Yakovlev, emerged who argued that the youth league could not fulfil the objective set out in the programme and become a mass organisation of working youth while it was closely tied to the RKP.<sup>67</sup>

For the time being debate was shelved as attention was concentrated on the war. It was of this period in 1919 that N. Ostrovsky, author of How the Steel was Tempered, wrote that 'with the Komsomol card we received a rifle and 200 rounds of

63. VIII s"ezd RKP, pp.435-6.

64. S.S. Khromov, (ed), Grazhdanskaya voina i voennaya interventsia v SSSR: entsiklopediya, M. 1983, p.509.

65. P, 21 November 1918.

66. Tseitlin, p.30.

67. ibid., pp.30-1.

ammunition'.<sup>68</sup> Throughout the civil war the Moscow RKSM organisation, united with the guberniya in June 1920, remained fairly small. In October 1918 membership in the city was 2500, and a year later barely 200 more.<sup>69</sup> In October 1919 a 'week of red youth', the equivalent of the party weeks, led to a doubling of the Moscow RKSM organisation to 5250 members.<sup>70</sup> By October 1921 city membership was just over 9000, with another 7745 in the guberniya.<sup>71</sup>

By mid-1921 the age of the average Komsomol member had fallen from 18-20 at the beginning of the war, to 17, 16, and in some places to 15. The main reason was the mobilisation of members in which not only individuals but whole factory cells were drafted. The social composition of the RKSM was therefore distorted as well as the age profile.<sup>72</sup> The fall in the average

68. Molodoi kommunist, 11, 1957, p.73. There were three all-Russian mobilisations of youth, and several local ones. In the first, in May 1919, the Moscow RKSM organisation sent 800 (20% of its total membership) against Kolchak on the Eastern front (Ocherki MPO, vol.2, p.124), including the chairman of the MK RKSM G.G. Tolmachev. In October 1919 the Moscow organisation sent 1000 to the Denikin front (ibid., p.331). The third youth mobilisation took place in 1920 for the Polish front. In all, about 24,847 Komsomoltsy were mobilised nationally during the war, Bor'ba klassov, 7-8, 1934, pp.179-80.

69. In October 1918 the guberniya organisation had 5000 members, and a year later 6500, Moskovskaya gorodskaya, p.182. By September 1919 the largest groups were in Basmannyi raion with 375 members in 23 cells, and 300 members in Lefortovo in 18 cells, P, 3 October 1919.

70. II vserossiiskii s"ezd RKSM: stenograficheskie otchet, M/L. 1924, p.174; Izvestiya TsK RKSM, 1, 26 March 1920. Membership of the RKSM nationally was as follows: 1918 22,000; 1919 90,000; 1920 400,000; 1921 400,000; 1922 247,000, Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 1st ed, vol.11, M. 1930, p.647.

71. Moskovskaya gorodskaya, p.182.

72. Yunyi kommunar, 46, 4 June 1921, p.8.

age, with membership open to all those over 14, affected the role of the RKSM and had an impact on the psychology of some of the active youth workers. The organisation tended to become an agency working among youth instead of an active organisation of youth. It would take a struggle, however, before the concept of the youth organisation as a 'transmission belt' dominated over the concept of it as a group of activists.

The activities of the RKSM in the city centred on the clubs in the factories and educational establishments. Here courses, discussions, and cultural events were organised 'to provide new cadres of conscious revolutionary workers' by breaking the tie of youth with their homes.<sup>73</sup> The league was particularly active among school pupils from late 1919 and organised several conferences to extend its influence.<sup>74</sup> A major aspect of the league's work was the struggle conducted against the many non-party, and even party groups organised beyond the aegis of the RKSM. In its own field the RKSM tended to act as the RKP writ small. One of these groups was the All-Russian Federation of Communist Youth formed in mid-1919, and several others were organised by the anarchists. These groups enjoyed extensive popularity. They stressed the need to raise the cultural level of youth by means of shows, dances and sport, and hence did not consider the Bolshevik party as the unique organisation for the victory of the socialist revolution. They were clearly part of the general effervescence of the Proletkult movement and were vigorously attacked by the party and the Moscow RKSM for

73. Yunyi kommunar, 2, 1 January 1919.

74. ibid., 3, 15 April 1920.

deflecting youth from the class struggle. The groups were dissolved by fiat and by force: the former predominating where workers were in the majority, and by force where they were dominated by the 'bourgeoisie'.<sup>75</sup>

The links between the Moscow RKSM and the party organisation took various forms. Above all the party insisted that its members under 20 (sometimes 21 or even 23 is stated) were to join the RKSM, though judging by the frequency with which this injunction was repeated it was observed more in the breach.<sup>76</sup> By October 1919 11.1% of the RKSM nationally were communists.<sup>77</sup> By March 1921 4% of the RKP were aged between 15-18, even though the minimum age of party membership was 18, and 15% were aged between 19-20.<sup>78</sup> The direct link between the two organisations was mutual representation. On 8 February 1919 the MK sent a representative onto the MK RKSM, and the RKs did the same. The party representatives had voting rights in the RKSM and were to supervise, as the MK put it later, the 'ideological and

75. Tseitlin, pp.31-2; Yunyi kommunar, 3, 15 April 1920; L.V. Lyutsareva, 'O nekotorykh formakh rukovodstva Moskovskoi partiinoi organizatsii deyatel'nost'yu komsomola v gody grazhdanskoi voyny (1919-1920)', Uch. zap. MGPI im. Potemkina, vol.56, 1959, p.42.

76. Soon after the I RKSM congress the TsK urged that all party members under 20 join Komsomol. It was reinforced by the MK's call on 11 January 1919 to the same effect (P, 18 January 1919). It took on mandatory force by decision of the VIII party congress, but still the MK repeated the call on 29 December 1919 (Lyutsareva, p.34). Failure to comply was finally threatened with expulsion from the party, KT, 6 August, 19 December 1920. In the last case the age stated was 21.

77. VLKSM za 10 let v tsifrakh, M. 1928, p.20.

78. X-s"ezd RKP, p.544.

organisational work' of Komsomol.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, the youth representatives were only given voting rights on the MK RKP in June 1920.<sup>80</sup>

A joint TsK RKP and RKSM instruction in August 1919 firmly swung the compromise definition of party-Komsomol relations of the founding congress in favour of the party by insisting that the RKSM TsK and city committees were under the 'direct subordination' of the corresponding party committees.<sup>81</sup> This was clearly a rebuff to Dunaevskii's critique of the inadequate mass nature of Komsomol. Since early 1919 he had been arguing that special mass organisations, alongside the RKSM, of soviets of working youth and youth sections under the trade unions were to be formed to defend the interests of the 'toiling youth of Russia'. In a critique which went far beyond that of the Democratic Centralists, and which in many ways prefigured that of the Workers' Opposition, he argued that the 'guiding role' of the RKP had formed an elite within the party. He criticised the development of 'thinking kernels' (myslyashchie yadra) in general which stifled the self-activity of the masses. The RKSM should develop as an organising centre allied to but independent of the RKP, he argued.<sup>82</sup>

Party cells or fractions were not usually formed in the RKSM, but now the August 1919 instruction allowed their formation if necessary. The MK bureau on 29 December 1919 discussed the

79. Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., p.15. 80. Lyutsareva, p.38.

81. P, 24 August 1919.

82. Ocherki MO VLKSM, p.125; A. Avtorkhanov, Soviet Youth - Twelve Komsomol Histories, Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Series 1, 51, July 1959, pp.9-10.

'crisis' in the Moscow Komsomol organisation. It was criticised for having concentrated too much on cultural work at the expense of political work. In other words, it had been too involved in Proletkult. Measures were outlined to turn the Komsomol 'into a genuine preparatory stage for entry into the RKP'. Various measures were adopted to increase party influence in the organisation, but the proposal to form a party fraction in it was referred to a full MK meeting.<sup>83</sup> This took place on 21 January 1920 and Lyudvinskaya, who had been an MK representative on the MK RKSM, insisted that a fraction be formed in the Moscow youth organisation, that a communist be delegated to every Komsomol cell, and various other measures in the same authoritarian spirit. While the MK meeting agreed with her general conclusions, the majority rejected the idea of forming a fraction on the grounds that the RKSM was sufficiently under the control of the party as it was.<sup>84</sup> In March 1920 the TsK confirmed that fractions were not to be formed in Komsomol organisations, as had become common, and neither were youth departments to be formed under party committees, since this led to 'misunderstandings' and substitutionalism.<sup>85</sup>

In mid-1920 Dunaevskii, now a member of the TsK RKSM, once again raised his earlier ideas. The TsK in September 1920 issued

83. P, 3 January 1920.

84. P, 28 January 1920.

85. KPSS v rez. i resh., vol.1, p.462; Izvestiya TsK RKP, 15, 24 March 1920. In the first part of 1920 the MK and its bureau several times took measures to 'strengthen' the Moscow Komsomol organisation. The MK bureau on 4 June 1920 (P, 8 June 1920), and a TsK circular of July 1920 called for more attention to be devoted to the youth organisation, but once again rejected the idea of forming youth departments under party committees, P, 27 July 1920.

a circular attacking the 'secret factional grouping' in the TsK RKSM and insisted that 'youth syndicalism...counterposed not the proletariat as a class to the bourgeois class, but young proletariat to adult proletariat'.<sup>86</sup> Dunaevskii was suspended from the party for six months, and his case was an augury for the fate of future oppositionists. In Moscow the debate over autonomy for the youth organisation reached fever pitch. The majority of the MK RKSM supported Dunaevskii, and now the Moscow youth organisation 'broke its links with the party'.<sup>87</sup> The crucial test was to be the II united guberniya youth conference, which met on the eve of the III RKSM congress (2-10 October 1920). Already suggestions had been made at the IX party conference (22-25 September 1920) for the RKSM to be disbanded and for its functions to be carried out by party youth departments. Instead, Krestinskii's proposals for tighter party control over Komsomol were adopted.<sup>88</sup> The decision was taken at the MK bureau meeting of 27 September 1920 to form a party fraction at the guberniya conference to direct its work. The tactic proved effective and despite rowdy sessions the party fraction carried the day and a new MK RKSM was selected more amenable to party control.<sup>89</sup>

As we shall see (part III) this was the period of debate in the party over democracy, the split between the verkhi and the nizy, and the problem of privileges. As Bukharin pointed out

86. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 21, 18 September 1920.

87. Tseitlin, p.36.

88. IX konf. RKP, pp.119, 127, 132.

89. Ocherki MO VLKSM, pp.126-7; Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.4.

at the III RKSM congress on 2 October, the RKSM suffered from many of the same problems as the party.<sup>90</sup> The defeat of the supporters of the independence of the youth organisation, confirmed at the III congress, now led to widespread demoralisation in the youth organisation. The new MK RKSM admitted in December 1920 that there was a lack of interest in the league both among rank and file members and the activists. Appointed tasks were not being carried out and meetings were very poorly attended.<sup>91</sup> By early 1921 the membership of the RKSM stood at nearly half a million. But as the TsK RKSM pointed out, this included a large 'hooligan' element, and the majority took no part in league life.<sup>92</sup> A reregistration was announced for early 1921, and this together with people who left for one reason or another led to the great fall noted in the national membership figures (footnote 70).

In the early 1920s the Komsomol organisation was marked by its radicalism. Moscow Komsomol gave overwhelming support to Trotsky's oppositional platform in 1923, it participated enthusiastically in the Yeseninshchina (the peasantist cultural movement associated with the poet Yesenin), and it played a vigorous part in the atheism campaigns. This would indicate that the reason for the organisation being 'seized by passivity'<sup>93</sup> in

90. P, 3 October 1920.

91. For example, out of 800 members in Gorodskoi raion, organised in 30 cells largely based in factories, only 30 appeared at general meetings, Yunyi kommunar, 1, 11 December 1920.

92. Byulleten' TsK RKSM, 22 January 1921.

93. Byulleten' TsK RKSM, 1 March 1921.



early 1921 was a response to the defeats suffered by the supporters of greater autonomy for the union, and that only in the NEP did the organisation recover its enthusiasm. The history of the Komsomol movement during the civil war illustrates that while the war and economic dislocation provided the background to centralisation and increased authoritarianism, the well-spring of Bolshevik domination of a mass organisation such as the Komsomol sprang from deeper sources.<sup>94</sup>

### 3. Students

Before going on to look at the party's relationship with other major groups in Moscow society a word should be said about the students. This case provides a vivid illustration of how the MPO extended its influence over a group in society. The city had a great concentration of educational establishments and with the extension of educational opportunities after the revolution, accompanied by an extraordinary surge of interest in higher education among both men and women, student numbers grew rapidly. Already by mid-1919 the number in higher education had doubled from the 32,871 in 1913 to 68,238 in August of that year. Over the same period, however, the number of secondary pupils had fallen from 41,355 to 21,343.<sup>95</sup>

Party influence over Moscow's students was asserted in 1920. In late April 1920 the MK bureau decided to form a special bureau

94. As Lenin wrote in December 1916: 'For the full independence of the youth union, but also for the complete freedom of comradely criticism of their mistakes. We must not flatter youth', Lenin PSS, vol.30, p.226.

95. VIMS, 3 September 1919.

of communist students with direct links to the MK on the grounds that the students lacked sufficient political leadership.<sup>96</sup> The move was probably associated with the attempts at that time to bring Komsomol under tighter control. At the beginning of September 1920 the MK bureau changed the status of the student bureau and decided that it would have the extensive controlling functions of a party fraction with the right to settle academic questions. A bureau was formed in the fraction to which the MK sent three responsible party workers.<sup>97</sup>

The first step of this bureau was to convene a major conference of all the higher educational establishments (VUZy) in the city. The meeting called for the complete reform of all VUZy and the creation of proletarian universities, and the key resolution argued that this could only be achieved by intensified party control. On the crucial question of relations with the many revolutionary associations of students the conference rejected them as both a form of work among the non-party student mass and as a form of representation from these organisations to the administrative bodies of VUZy. The principle of the conference was 'no intermediaries between communists and non-party people'.<sup>98</sup> It can therefore be seen that the reform of higher education was not only designed to counteract bourgeois influence but also to undermine any interest aggregation between the party and the mass of the students unless they were dominated by the party.

96. KT, 27 April 1920.

97. Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.4; KT, 5 September 1920.

98. KT, 28 September 1920.

The application of the principle clearly encountered some opposition from non-party students. For example, on 1 October 1920 all the students of the I Moscow University, about 2000 in all, met to elect two representatives to the presidium (the controlling body) of the university. Before the meeting the bureau of the communist fraction had sought to reach agreement with the non-party people on the choice of candidates. No agreement could be reached because of what was described as 'Menshevik-SR demagogy'. The group accused of this refused to participate in the elections and left the meeting.<sup>99</sup>

A conference of communist students in the city in mid-November 1920 again condemned the 'revolutionary unions' and 'revolutionary associations' as a form of political organisation for students, and communists were ordered not to participate in them. The RKP, the conference resolution stated, must work in the usual way among the non-party masses 'without any intermediary associations'. The associations were not to have the right to represent students in the management boards of VUZy. These bodies were to be equally divided between student representatives and the teaching staff, with representatives of all proletarian bodies with an interest in education. The same conference adopted a statute for the MK student bureau which emphasised the role of the party cells in education.<sup>100</sup> The struggle for control over higher education did not end here, but the strategy had been marked out.

99. KT, 14 October 1920.

100. KT, 17 November 1920. The struggle for control over Moscow University is described in Fitzpatrick, Commissariat, pp.83ff.

#### 4. National minorities

In addition to the large number of foreigners, many of whom were ex-prisoners of war, Moscow in this period became the natural centre for various expatriate communists, above all from Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. In March 1918 a section of foreign groups was established under the party TsK, which in May 1918 was formed into a federation, and in early 1920 dissolved.<sup>101</sup> Up to mid-1919 the communists in the federation were simultaneously members of the local RKP organisation. Under the MK from November 1919<sup>102</sup> there was a department of national minorities uniting the bureaux of the various expatriate communist groups, the Polish, Latvian, Hungarian and Yugoslav groups being the largest. The bureaux were responsible under the MK department to conduct agitprop work among the non-party members of their nationalities.

The work of the national minority groups was consolidated in early 1920. The TsK resolved that they were to restrict themselves to agitprop and not to form themselves into extra-territorial national communist parties.<sup>103</sup> The MK adopted a set of instructions on them in mid-March 1920. A department of national minorities was to be formed under the MK composed of the bureaux of the Polish, Latvian, and other groups, and they lost the right to exist as separately constituted bodies. The department was to be governed by the MPO statute and the programme of the RKP. It was to be strictly subordinate to the MK and a member

101. VIII s"ezd RKP, pp.520-1, nl2.

102. P, 25 November 1919.

103. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 13, 2 March 1920; IX s"ezd RKP, p.506.

of the MK was placed at its head, and similarly the raion departments were to be headed by an RK member.<sup>104</sup> By January 1921 they were grouped into a national minority sub-department of the MK agitprop department with 11 national sections.<sup>105</sup> The V Moscow guberniya party conference called for further restrictions to be placed on the national groups, and urged that they were to be stripped of all general organisational functions.<sup>106</sup> Once again, the party was careful to ensure that it retained an organisational monopoly over an important group in Moscow society.

##### 5. Female workers (Zhenotdel)

An important field of party work was that concerned with the female labour force. Both the first world war and the civil war had drawn more and more women into production (Chapter 2). By spring 1921 women were a majority in several Moscow trade unions: in the textile industry there were 103,794, 70% of the Moscow guberniya textile union; in the sewing industry 14,168 (75%); in the tobacco industry 3144 (79%); among foodworkers 17,930 (35%); and 18,245 (33%) printworkers. Nearly 200,000 of the members covered by the MGSPS were women, nearly half of all the workers.<sup>107</sup> Male labour in soviet institutions was also gradually replaced by women.

104. P, 16 March 1920.

105. Otchet MK za yanvar' 1921g., p.38.

106. V Mosk. gubpartkonf., p.15.

107. Tri goda proletariata: itogi raboty sredi zhenshchin Moskovskoi organizatsi RKP, M. 1921, p.26.

Female workers are usually characterised as being chiefly concerned with the problem of supplies, as being closer to the land, and as less organised than their male counterparts. Such a view is lent credence by the low level of female participation in party and soviet bodies. In the giant Zhaho mill, for instance, out of 7000 women employed in early 1919 only 40 of them were members of the cell of 47 communists.<sup>108</sup> In November 1920 women occupied only about 7% of the seats in the Moscow soviet, and comprised 9% of the joint party organisation.<sup>109</sup> The relatively low level of female participation in political life was obviously largely due to the traditional patterns of authority which tended to reserve political activity for men. At the same time, the type of work where women predominated and the emphasis on their domestic role both ensured that attempts to involve them in political and social life would require a long period of change and could not be achieved by a single act of political revolution. For whatever reason, no political or ideological movement for political or organisational autonomy comparable to that in the youth movement arose among the female labour force or in its organisations.

From the outset female worker political organisation was focused on the party. The post-revolutionary history of the women's movement in Moscow at first centred around the journal Zhizn' rabotnitsy, issued from autumn 1917 but based on a journal of the same name put out by MOB from June 1917. In early October

108. VIMS, 23 January 1919.

109. KT, 6 November 1920. Table 18 shows that women constituted 13% of the joint MPO in September 1920, but this probably represents the peak of female membership.

1917 the MK and MOB organised a special commission to conduct agitprop among women with a representative from these two organisations plus one from the raion TUs. A women's conference was held on 15 October 1917 with 600 attending.<sup>110</sup> The aim of the commission was primarily to mobilise support for the Bolsheviks, and it appears to have disappeared after October. After the October revolution the MOK, with Inessa Armand a frequent member, was more active in this field than the city committee. In November 1917 it formed a 'commission for agitation and propaganda among female workers' to organise this work.<sup>111</sup> It was this body which provided the inspiration for the I guberniya female worker conference, held in early November 1918.<sup>112</sup> In turn, the conference provided the organisational centre for the I all-Russian congress of female workers and female peasants which met at the end of the month. The delegation from Moscow was by far the largest, with 35 delegates from Basmannyi raion alone. At the congress Lenin and Sverdlov restricted their speeches to general comments on the need to draw women into soviet and communist construction.<sup>113</sup> The congress called for the formation of female worker agitprop commissions under party committees, and this was advertised in a TSK circular following the congress.<sup>114</sup> Their formation was coordinated by a

110. E. Levi, 'Moskovskaya bol'shevistskaya organizatsiya s fevralya do iyul'skikh dnei', in Ocherki po istorii oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii v Moskve, M. 1927, p.59.

111. Aleksandra Kollontai in Tri goda, p.16.

112. A. Unksova, in Tri goda, p.19.

113. Kollontai, op.cit., p.16.

114. Perepiska, vol.V, pp.65-8; P, 20 December 1918.

female worker commission under the TsK in which Armand, until her death in 1920, and Kollontai were active.

Even before the congress several raions had begun to form these commissions,<sup>115</sup> and towards the end of December one was formed under the MK.<sup>116</sup> However, it was only on 2 February 1919 that the MK commission set to work and took over the general management of the raion commissions.<sup>117</sup> They were then formed in the remaining raions.<sup>118</sup> Both the central and raion commissions in 1919 usually consisted of no more than a secretary and a couple of agitators each and were mainly concerned with soviet work and aimed to involve women in the soviet departments. As could be expected, the development of the female worker commissions encountered at best a lack of interest and at worst hostility. Not all the RKs were convinced of the necessity of this work, an opinion shared by the heads of the soviet departments, rank and file workers, and even communists.<sup>119</sup>

The lack of party commitment to the commissions led to calls by the MK commission in May 1919 for it to be reorganised into a party department with greater help from the MK itself. For unspecified reasons the MK refused the request at the time,<sup>120</sup> though it probably considered that the war and other tasks had a higher priority than supporting the female worker movement, which in any case posed no political threat to party

115. Gorodskoi raion led the way, followed by Alekseevo-Rostokinskii and Zamoskvorech'e (Unksova, op.cit., p.19).

116. It consisted of Barinova, Kurinova, Lizhina, Madestova, and Torno-Pol'skaya, P, 22 December 1918.

117. Unksova, op.cit., p.19.

118. P, 18 May, 11 July 1919.

119. Unksova, op.cit., p.19.

120. Unksova, op.cit., p.20.



hegemony. By August 1919, however, the MK had changed its position and decided to form a female worker department (zhenotdel) headed by a member of the MK, and called on the RKs to do the same, and for the cells to appoint a person to be responsible for this work.<sup>121</sup> In September of that year the TsK also reorganised its commission into a department, headed initially by Armand. It had taken a long campaign by the female worker commission activists to convince the party committees of the necessity of this change. On the other hand, there are indications that the conversion of the commissions into party departments was a measure designed not only to improve their effectiveness but also to ensure adequate party supervision over the organised women's movement. As Minkov put it at the November 1919 Moscow guberniya party conference, there had been a gulf between the commissions and the party committees, and the majority of the commission members had been 'very young party members or sympathisers who did not know how to carry out active and correct work'. Hence he called for one or two committee members to join the zhenotdely.<sup>122</sup>

The appointment of cell members responsible for female worker organisation took place only slowly in circumstances of a multitude of other demands being placed on them. Only 87 cells had complied by January 1920, but by September 1920 the figure had risen to 275, and by mid-1921 628.<sup>123</sup> Raion unification in spring 1920 consolidated zhenotdel reserves in the raions, and the unification of the city and guberniya in May 1920 led to

121. P, 16 August 1919.

122. XVI Mosk. gubpartkonf., p.6.

123. Unksova, op.cit., p.21.

increased agitation among female peasants. The zhenotdely called delegate meetings of female workers. The delegates were usually elected not for one meeting but for a certain term (usually three months, with one delegate representing 50 female workers) and represented their electorate at all meetings held in that period, a system unique to this organisation.<sup>124</sup> By the end of the civil war five all-city female worker delegate conferences had been held.<sup>125</sup> By November 1920 there were about 2500 permanent delegates in the city and guberniya. As S.N. Smidovich, head of the MK zhenotdel since 1919, stated, they tended to be involved in the practical work of the soviets, especially the supply departments, education and social security. She estimated that the female worker organisation was active, through the system of delegates, in about 5% of the enterprises in the city.<sup>126</sup>

From the above account it can be seen that the Moscow female worker movement was from the first closely allied to the party organisation and took its inspiration from the objectives set by the party. As we have seen, the history of the youth movement followed a different course. Several reasons can be suggested

124. In the raions delegate meetings for women were held fairly frequently. In Sushchevsko-Mar'inskii raion, for instance, 5 delegate meetings and one conference with 300 delegates had met in the three months from the formation of the commission in March 1919, P, 18 May 1919.

125. The first had been attended by 200 delegates (November-December 1918); the second by 300 (January 1919); the third by over 900 (June 1919) (P, 12 June 1919); the fourth by 3000 (March 1920); and the fifth (meeting for the first time with the guberniya) was attended by 3771 delegates (July 1920) (Unksova, op.cit., p.22; Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., p.9; Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya rabotnits i krest'yanok (rezolyutsii i stat'i), M. 1920, p.8.

126. KT, 6 November 1920.

for this difference. Whereas the youth movement from 1917 took on a mass character distinct from the party's youth organisation, and was only later brought under party control, no such powerful independent movement developed among female workers. They traditionally laboured under a two-fold oppression: as workers, they shared the deprivations of the working class as a whole; and as women, they suffered from the whole gamut of cultural prejudices typical of the society. Even to achieve party support in the formation of the female worker commissions and departments in Moscow and elsewhere they had to wage a determined struggle. But the price of party support during the civil war, necessary because the female worker movement lacked sufficiently powerful historical traditions to enable it to develop on its own strength alone, was that a compromise had to be made between the more general aims of the movement, aimed at changing fundamental social relations, and the more limited function of the female worker movement, as a way of mobilising support for the Bolsheviks. While during the 1920s the compromise was for a time somewhat broadened to include the whole range of social conditions of life known as byt, the legacy of the civil war prevented the development of a women's movement solely committed to its own liberation.

#### 8. The peasantry

Towards the end of the civil war in Moscow, and emphasised by the unification of the city and guberniya party and soviet organisations in early 1920, the problem of agitation among the peasantry became a direct concern of the city organisation. We have already noted the miniscule number of communists in the

guberniya. Added to the previous resistance to party penetration in the countryside at the end of 1920 economic factors made the difficulties worse. In Moscow guberniya in 1920 the sown area in comparison with 1917, at a conservative estimate, had decreased by 15%, slightly lower than the national average of 16%.<sup>127</sup> Added to this the guberniya's 230,000 peasant households in 1920 were faced with drought and the consequent harvest loss.<sup>128</sup>

The nature of agitprop work in the guberniya is illustrated by Minkov's report at the XVI guberniya party conference in November 1919. The main topic discussed at peasant meetings was the situation at the fronts since, as Minkov stated, the state of the fronts depended on the peasantry. Hence work among the peasantry, 'among the deserters', was largely agitational:

The peasantry is that layer of the population which is the most difficult for us to bend to the side of communism owing to its petty-bourgeois egotistic psychology, caused by its landlordish petty-proprietor position in capitalist society, its isolation from large-scale industry, and the backwardness in which it has been kept for years.<sup>129</sup>

The lack of response to the party by the peasantry was not only a result of the factors listed by Minkov but also by the lack of sensitivity displayed by party agitators in the countryside. A speaker at the conference even argued that during a recent peasant week in the guberniya party agitators had done more harm than good because of their 'complete lack of understanding of the countryside'.<sup>130</sup>

127. Posevnaya kompaniya v Moskovskoi gubernii, M. 1921, p.4.

128. ibid., p.12.

129. XVI gubpartkonf, pp.4-5.

130. ibid., p.15.

Under the old guberniya committee the department for work in the countryside had been neglected. The new joint organisation incorporated the department and increased its staff.<sup>131</sup> Its main campaign was the organisation of a 'peasant week' from 20 August 1920 in which 400 experienced and 500 inexperienced party workers were sent from the city.<sup>132</sup> At the end of the year the department participated in the organisation of the sowing campaign in the guberniya, and teams of Moscow party workers were sent out to intensify agitation in the villages. Moscow guberniya avoided some of the worst peasant uprisings, but it would appear from the above figures that the 'peasants' strike' was one response to the requisitioning demands of the state.<sup>133</sup>

While the policies adopted by the party in relationship to non-party people were effective in achieving the immediate aim of winning the war, they inevitably accented the dominance of administrative methods. 'Iron discipline' within the party stimulated military methods in relation to non-party groups, which in turn reinforced dictatorial methods within the party. Myasnikov gives a vivid description of the cycle when for a short time at the end of 1920 and early 1921 the party and trade union debates forced the issue into the open:

The times created a long chain of repeated recurrence of party pressure (nazhim) and the dictatorship of the committees. We must not forget that pressure was brought to bear not only by the all-Russian centre but

131. Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., p.4; KT, 1 August 1920.

132. Otchet MK za avgust 1920g., p.16.

133. The decline in sown area was partially due, of course, to the lack of manpower, tools, horsepower, and seed.

by every given or local centre in relation to its periphery: the gubkom, uezd committee, and even the cell bureau. We can recall (and indeed it is probably still being practiced) how many of our comrades, rank and file worker communists, at a factory or plant meeting put pressure on the non-party masses. I remember how at a meeting of one of Moscow's enterprises (Mars) I asked why the factory committee, composed of communists, conducted the general meeting on elections to the Moscow soviet in such a dictatorial way. The leading comrade (he is a member of the opposition now) answered me in these precise words: one cannot deal with the masses in any other way (*italics in original*). And do not comrades remember the multitude of incidents in our agitational practice: the barring of factory gates<sup>134</sup> so that workers could not leave meetings, and so on.

At the time such methods were considered necessary and justified by the military emergency, but they left a legacy which outlasted the war.

134. Myasnikov, Izb.proiz., pp.319-20.

## CHAPTER 8

### The Soviets, Bureaucracy, and Popular Control

One of the major changes influencing the party was its transformation into the organising force in the localities as a territorial entity controlling the social organisations at every level. The development of the relations between the party and the state was the subject of continuing debate during the civil war. Above all, the question centred on the relationship between the party and the soviets; the powers of the localities; the prevention of bureaucratism; and the relationship between the party members working in the soviet apparatus and the party organisations.

#### 1. The Moscow soviets

##### a. The Moscow soviet

##### i. Organisation and elections

The Moscow workers' and soldiers' soviets had been united immediately following the October revolution. At the first plenary session of the joint soviet on 14 November 1917 an executive committee (EC) had been elected with 60 representatives from the workers' soviet and 30 from the soldiers', each acting as a section of the soviet. A presidium of 15 was also elected.<sup>1</sup> Both the EC and the presidium were elected by the full plenum of

1. The EC consisted of 63 Bolsheviks, 10 Mensheviks, 3 LSRs, and 4 United. The presidium consisted of 11 Bolsheviks (Budzinskii, Lomov, Malinovskii, Pokrovskii, Rozengol'ts, Rykov, Smidovich, Smirnov, Usievich, Yaroslavskii), 3 LSRs (Bitsenko, Sablin, Zitta), and 1 United (Volgin), KM, col.33.

both sections.<sup>2</sup> M.N. Pokrovskii was chosen by the MK to replace the coalition supporter V.P. Nogin as chairman of the soviet.

The Mensheviks refused to join the presidium on the grounds that it would take power away from the plenum. Their fears were almost immediately realised as the presidium took on the extraordinary powers of the Military Revolutionary Committee, which restricted itself to security matters and at some unknown date in late 1917 disappeared. The new joint soviet used the existing structure of the workers' soviet, but the departments and committees were now subordinate to the presidium and required its signature before taking even the most minor of decisions. The presidium was in almost continuous session, meeting 123 times between November 1917 and March 1918,<sup>3</sup> and 30 times alone in the last two weeks of November 1917.<sup>4</sup> At the EC session of 27 November 1917 an attempt was made to restrict the presidium's functions, with political questions to be decided by the EC which was to meet twice a week.<sup>5</sup> The same meeting restructured the work of the soviet by forming collegia and commissions at the head of each department controlled by a commissar. Democratic forms were therefore introduced in parallel with a centralised practice, and they coexisted until the civil war undermined the collegia system. From the first the forms in which Bolshevik power was achieved, by a military operation, were institutionalised in the structure of the soviet in the form of the presidium.

2. SD, 15 November 1917; Podgotovka i pobeda oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii v Moskve: dokumenty i materialy, M. 1957, p.474.

3. KM, col.32.

4. Aleshchenko (1968), p.27.

5. loc.cit.



Elections to the Moscow soviet in April 1918, held in an atmosphere of bitter recriminations between the various parties, nevertheless saw significant Bolshevik gains (Table 22). At the first meeting of the newly elected soviet on 23 April 1918 the soviet was restructured, in line with MK recommendations, to relieve the presidium of some of its everyday duties and to give greater powers to the departments. Each of the 17 departments was to be headed by a collegium led by a member of the presidium. The soldiers' section had already been abolished on 19 March 1918 with direct representation from the army envisaged.<sup>6</sup>

With the onset of the civil war the Moscow soviet plenum entered a period of increasing ineffectiveness. The majority of its 42 sessions in 1918 were held in the first half of the year. The plenum met 28 times in 1919, and in the first 8 months of 1920 15 times.<sup>7</sup> It increasingly only met for triumphal occasions and to hear reports from one or another Soviet leader. On 8 October 1918 the powers of the presidium were once again substantially increased and its membership was drastically

6. A new EC of 71 was elected: 55 Bolsheviks, 9 Mensheviks, 4 LSRs, and 3 Centre SRs. A new presidium was elected on 26 April of 24 members and 4 candidates, 22 Bolsheviks and 2 LSRs, and the Mensheviks still refused to participate. The presidium members were Smidovich (chairman), Akulov, Bukharin, Burovtsev, Goncharov, Ignatov, Lomov, Maksimov, Mostovenko, Nazarov, Obukh, Orekhov, Osinskii, Piskarev, Radzivillov, Ratekhin, Rogov, Semashko, Serebryakov, Sokol'nikov, Vladimirskii, Znamenskii, and the 2 LSRs Bitsenko and Dobrokhotova (KM, cols.34-5). Following the LSR uprising of 5-7 July 1918 and the Menshevik-influenced worker disturbances of early summer 1918 new elections were held to the soviet's executive bodies on 23 July 1918, which left only 1 LSR on an EC of 41 and 11 Bolsheviks on a reduced presidium. The 11 were Smidovich (chairman), Burovtsev, Goncharov, Ignatov, Kuraev, Maksimov, Orekhov, Rogov, Serebryakov, Vladimirskii, Znamenskii, KM, col.35.

7. KM, col.5.

reduced to 5. At the same time it was no longer to be elected by the plenum but by the EC.<sup>8</sup> These moves were ostensibly balanced by the plenum decision of 16 October 1918 to make the EC more responsible to itself by demanding more frequent reports on its activities. Nevertheless, the powers of the EC were enhanced and it was now allowed to issue orders in its own name.<sup>9</sup>

No general elections were held to the soviet between April 1918 and February 1920<sup>10</sup>, and instead the principle of recall was operated whereby factories and institutions could at any time change their deputy. In practice this often turned into a manoeuvre to eliminate non-Bolshevik deputies. Between May and December 1918 423 deputies were recalled, an average of 53 a month. In 1919 411 were recalled, about 34 a month. In the two years a total of 834 deputies were changed, and about 99% of their replacements were communists.<sup>11</sup> Kamenev, speaking to Bertrand Russell in 1920, stated that the main reasons for recall were drunkenness, departure for the front, a change of politics on the part of the electorate, and failure to make reports to the electorate once a fortnight, obligatory for all deputies.<sup>12</sup>

8. loc.cit.

9. The 16 October session elected a presidium of 5: Rogov, Romanov, Smidovich, Vladimirskii, Znamenskii. Kamenev, elected soviet chairman in August 1918, and Serebryakov as the soviet's business manager were automatically included, VIMS, 17 October 1918.

10. On 27 May 1919 the presidium was expanded to 10 members and the EC was renewed as part of an attempt to rejuvenate the soviet. The 10 were Kamenev (chairman), Likhachev, Maksimov, Rogov, Rusakov, Smidovich, Tsivtsivadze, Vladimirskii, Zelenskii, Znamenskii, Stenotchety MS, 15, 1919, p.225; P, 29 May 1919.

11. VIMS, 14 February 1920.

12. Bertrand Russell, The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism, London 1920, p.75.

A reregistration of the plenum in December 1918 discovered that the number of Menshevik deputies had already fallen from 86 to 19 through recall since April 1918. The total number of deputies had fallen from 869 to 662, indicating that a quarter of the deputies had left for one reason or another, and a survey of Moscow's enterprises in February 1919 found that about 300, or two-fifths of the total census enterprises, lacked a representative in the soviet.<sup>13</sup>

Concurrent with the decline in the plenum the work of the soviet was streamlined. At the height of the civil war Kamenev argued that all resources should be concentrated on the military, supply and social security tasks. In July 1919 the soviet reorganised its work to concentrate personnel on these tasks by reducing the numbers in its 20 collegia, and the collegia were abolished altogether in some departments and in most raion soviets. The non-party conferences and not the soviets were now to play the role of intermediaries between the soviet state and the population.<sup>14</sup> Further centralisation in the Moscow soviets was implemented in November 1919. Current work in the Moscow soviet was to be conducted by a rather shadowy general management committee responsible only to the presidium, which still retained ultimate political responsibility. Collegia were to be further reduced and departments centralised. All current work in the raions was to be conducted by the chairmen of the raion soviet ECs responsible to the presidia on matters of principle, and the

13. Stenotchety MS, 3, 1919, p.33.

14. P, 15 July 1919; VIMS, 14 July, 1 August 1919.

ECs themselves were to be reduced to a maximum of ten members.<sup>15</sup>

The lull in the civil war in early 1920 permitted general elections to be held to the Moscow soviet. The elections ended on 29 February 1920 after 15 days of voting and saw the Bolsheviks returned with an increased majority (Table 22).<sup>16</sup> Out of a total of about 1,200,000 people in the city 606,000 were unable to vote for various reasons.<sup>17</sup> According to official figures 569,803 people were eligible to vote, though from these figures 594,000 had the right. Out of the former figure 236,682 people voted, 42% of those eligible and 20% of the total population.<sup>18</sup> Clearly, whatever the exact figures, the turnout was low and indicates a reluctance to participate in the elections.

At the first plenary session of the soviet on 6 March 1920 Kamenev, opposed only by Martov who received 31 votes, was elected chairman.<sup>19</sup> Myasnikov's proposed list of Bolsheviks for the EC was opposed by both the Mensheviks and the non-party group on the grounds that they deserved representation. In the event

15. VIMS, 13 November 1919.

16. Various figures have been given for the results, but the following are probably the most accurate: Communists 1316 deputies (84.3%), Communist sympathisers 52 (3.3%), non-party 145 (9.3%), Mensheviks 46 (2.9%), Anarchist-Maximalists 1, and the Jewish Socialist Party 1, to give a total of 1561 deputies (VIMS, 8 March 1920; P, 3 March 1920; KM, col.673). Support for non-party candidates often represented an anti-Bolshevik vote.

17. 468,000 (39%) were under 18; 90,000 (7.5%) were old, ill, or criminals, and 30,000 (2.5%) were deprived of voting rights by the terms of the July 1918 Soviet constitution since they hired labour.

18. Stenotchety MS, 1, 1920, p.1; VIMS, 8 March 1920.

19. Stenotchety MS, 1, 1920, p.2.

their protests were ignored and a pure Bolshevik list of 40 members and 12 candidates was adopted.<sup>20</sup> The minority groupings were thereby deprived of any representation on the soviet's executive bodies.<sup>21</sup>

At that session Dan on behalf of the Mensheviks insisted that the election results did not reflect the true situation in the city. He catalogued a whole series of factors inhibiting the Mensheviks: lack of newspapers, no meeting halls, freedom of speech curtailed, and the use of direct violence against them. Electoral privileges had been abused by the Bolsheviks, he claimed, as instanced by the 300 members of the MGSPS having the right to nominate 148 soviet deputies. Electoral geography had been gerrymandered in order to under-represent the Menshevik-inclined employees, and because of the fusion of the electoral apparatus with the Communist Party fair elections were ruled out. Despite this, he stated, wherever Mensheviks had stood they had been elected. He insisted that the Mensheviks would help in the struggle against counter-revolution, but called for the full democratisation of the soviet system so that the 'voice of the workers could once again be heard'.<sup>22</sup> There is a mass of

20. Stenotchety MS, 1, 1920, p.13; KM, col.37. The meeting of the EC on 9 March 1920 selected a presidium of 7: Kamenev, Likhachev, Lisitsyn, Mel'nichanskii, Myasnikov, Rogov, and Smidovich, and 2 candidates: Rusakov and Serebryakov, KT, 1 March 1920.

21. The rationale for excluding non-party representatives from soviet executive bodies was explained by the communist fraction of the newly united Krasnopresnenskii raion soviet in March 1920: it had been discovered, they stated, that non-partyness had been used as a mask to cover undesirable party affiliations. There was nothing to prevent non-party people from joining a party, they argued, KT, 31 March 1920.

22. Stenotchety MS, 1, 1920, pp.12-13.

evidence to support the Menshevik accusations.<sup>23</sup> When the British Labour Party delegation met the Moscow printworkers on 23 May 1920 both Chernov, leader of the SRs and sought by the Bolsheviks, and Dan inveighed against the restrictions on their activities:

You think we have freedom, workers' power. Nothing of the sort. Our newspapers are closed, meetings are not allowed. Tell the proletariat of the West that it is now no better than it was under the autocracy.<sup>24</sup>

Bertrand Russell, in Moscow from 11 May - 16 June 1920, commented on his return that although the Bolsheviks claimed a greater democracy in the soviet, with recall and occupational constituencies, 'no conceivable system of free elections would

23. The American journalist Marguerite Harrison states that the voting by acclamation in factories inhibited the raising of dissident voices. She reports the method of uniting places where the Bolsheviks were weak with Bolshevik strongholds to ensure a majority for the latter. An example of this was the joining of the Moscow food administration with the staff of the Cheka for voting purposes (Harrison, Marooned, p.67). Emma Goldman reports the case of an unnamed Moscow factory which elected an anarchist to the Moscow soviet in the February 1920 elections. Three times the soviet refused to register him as a deputy and instead the Bolshevik candidate Semashko, commissar for health, was forced on them after the arrest of several workers. Chekists attended other election meetings and insisted, by the use of arms, that communists were elected. Despite this the bakers elected their own candidates (Goldman, Disillusionment, pp.139-40). Indirect evidence of Bolshevik manipulation in elections comes from the activities of N. Osinskii in Tula in March 1920. After a long period of 'no discussion' (bez preni) the party organisation had decided to make the elections free: 'Our party organisation in this campaign set itself completely different aims than those in Moscow. We decided that a communist soviet was not obligatory...We set mass agitation as the highest priority even if this would be at the expense of several dozen mandates'. In the elections voting was secret and the party list included some non-party people (Vestnik Propagandy, MK RKP(b), 8, 12 July 1920, p.76). In the event 50 Mensheviks were elected, Liebman, p.250.

24. KT, 25 May 1920. There were ten people in the delegation, including Ben Turner, Ethel Snowden, Robert Williams, Purcell, and Russell as a representative of the press. After the meeting Chernov managed to slip away, but Dan was less fortunate and was detained by the Cheka, Goldman, Disillusionment, p.135.

give majorities to the communists, either in the town or in the country'.<sup>25</sup>

The end of the worst phase of the civil war saw attempts to redress the balance of power away from the presidium and its general management body. An instruction issued by the EC meeting of 15 April 1920 stressed that the presidium was responsible to the EC, which coordinated the work of the whole soviet, while the presidium was only to deal with practical current affairs.<sup>26</sup> It was only with the unification of the city and guberniya soviets in May 1920 that the city soviet became responsible to a general gathering other than the national soviet congresses and VTsIK. Up to that time the Moscow soviet's executive bodies were only responsible to the soviet plenum itself and the NKVD, a situation created by the abolition of the oblast soviet organisation in early 1919.

The idea of unification had been mooted several times in 1919 but had come to nothing, possibly owing to the city soviet's fear of losing its independence. In 1920 however, with pressure from the TsK to form a single system of party organisations, the unification of the soviets inevitably followed. At the 21 May 1920 guberniya party conference Zelenskii argued that once the party organisations had been united the soviet organisations would have to follow suit. At the same time economic considerations also demanded the ending of artificial barriers between the city and its hinterland in respect to supplies, labour and economic planning.<sup>27</sup> A unification commission decided

25. Russell, pp.72-3.

26. KT, 20 April 1920.

27. KM, col.674.

that there was to be a joint EC for the city and the guberniya: 30 members from the city and 20 from the guberniya.<sup>28</sup> The highest organ was to be the guberniya conference of soviets elected on the basis of one deputy from every 2000 workers and one from 10,000 peasants to ensure a proletarian majority in the united soviet.<sup>29</sup> On 11 June 1920 the first session of the joint EC, consisting of 51 members and 23 candidates, elected a presidium of 11 nominated by the MK.<sup>30</sup> The old 23 departments and 7 commissions under the city soviet, and 20 departments under the guberniya soviet, were merged to form 18 new departments.<sup>31</sup> Further elections took place at the II guberniya soviet conference on 16 December 1920 to an EC of 50 and 26 candidates.<sup>32</sup> Following the disturbances of early 1921 the elections to the Moscow soviet in April 1921 reduced the Bolshevik majority by 10% to 72.9%, while the 533 (25.2%) non-party deputies clearly represented a protest vote (Table 22).

28. KT, 16 May 1920.

29. KT, 22 May 1920.

30. Kamenev (chairman), Badaev, Lavrov, Likhachev, Lisitsyn, Mel'nichanskii, Minkov, Polidorov, Rogov, Smidovich, Zelenskii, with Kirov and Rusakov as candidates, KT, 15 June 1920.

31. KT, 2 June 1920.

32. KT, 18 December 1920. At the 3 January 1921 EC session a new presidium was elected of Kamenev, Badaev, Boguslavskii, Drozhzhin, Lavrov, Likhachev, Rogov, Tarasov, Uryvaev, Zelenskii, and Zheltov, with Minkov and Orekhov as candidates (KT, 4 January 1921). Between 14 November 1917 and 3 January 1921 a total of 53 people served on the Moscow soviet presidium in its 8 compositions, only 4 of whom were LSRs and 1 United, none of whom served after July 1918. Smidovich served in every presidium save the last, and Rogov in all except the first, i.e., each was elected 7 times. Kamenev sat in every presidium after August 1918. A significant feature of the 3 January 1921 elections was the large proportion who joined for the first time, 5 out of 11 members, and included figures such as Uryvaev and Zheltov who were to figure prominently in the 1920s. A new generation of Moscow soviet leaders was emerging.



ii. Composition

Table 22

The composition of the Moscow soviet plenum, 1917-1921

	Jun 1917		May 1918		Dec 1918		Feb 1920		Apr 1921	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	700	100	869	100	662	100	1532	100	2115	100
<u>Sex</u>										
Male	677	96.7	830	95.5	634	95.8	1399	91.3	2031	96.0
Female	23	3.3	39	4.5	28	4.2	133	8.7	84	4.0
<u>Party</u>										
Bolshevik	230	32.8	491	56.5	430	64.9	1270	82.9	1543	72.9
Bol.symp.	-	-	114	13.1	96	14.5	50	3.3	-	-
Menshevik	221	31.6	86	9.9	19	2.9	40	2.6	12	0.6
(L)SR	132	18.9	31	3.6	8	1.2	-	-	6	0.3
Others	63	9.0	65	7.5	11	1.7	6	0.4	10	0.5
Non-party	54	7.7	73	8.4	42	6.3	166	10.8	533	25.2
Not known	-	-	9	1.0	56	8.5	-	-	11	0.5
<u>Profession</u>										
Manual worker			670	71.3	437	66.0	1146	74.8	-	-
Employee			63	7.3	51	7.7	250	16.3	-	-
Brain worker			142	16.3	97	14.6	136	8.9	-	-
Red Army			2	0.2	-	-	149	9.7	-	-
Not known			44	5.1	77	11.6	-	-	-	-
<u>Occupation</u>										
Manual worker			356	40.8	218	32.9	488	31.8	-	-
Employee			35	4.0	23	3.5	-	-	-	-
Brain worker			364	41.9	316	47.7	895	58.4	-	-
Red Army			-	-	-	-	149	9.7	-	-
Not known			114	13.1	105	15.9	-	-	-	-

Sources: Moskovskii soviet za desyat' let raboty, M.1927, pp.78-9; KM, cols.39-48.

The percentage of Bolsheviks in the soviet increased steadily throughout the civil war as they tightened their hold on the city: from just over half in April 1918 to over four-fifths in February 1920. At the same time the proportion of non-communist or communist sympathiser deputies fell from nearly a third in 1918 to less than 15% in 1920. The fall in the percentage of sympathisers in February 1920 is probably due to

their induction into the party during the party week of October 1919. The SR vote collapsed rapidly from mid-1917, while the Mensheviks were able to retain a significant presence up to 1920. With the beginning of the NEP the percentage of communist deputies fell, but at the same time the proportion of non-Bolshevik deputies fell to a miniscule 1.4% though the true level of support for them is probably revealed by the high proportion of non-party deputies elected.

From Table 22 we can see the tendency for the number of deputies in some sort of management job to rise. The massive agitation campaign of February 1920 to bring in 'fresh' workers was successful in raising their numbers, but the proportion actually involved in labour continued to fall. The largest non-worker occupational groups in the soviet were members and chairmen of soviet collegia and committees, followed by the heads of institutions and enterprises, and finally members of commissions of one form or another. An indication of the growing 'intellectualisation' of the soviet was the rise in the general educational level. Those with higher education rose from 6.5% in April 1918 to 9.5% in 1920, and those with secondary education from 14 to 18%, respectively. The great majority, however, had only gained elementary education.<sup>33</sup> By 1920 the single largest union represented in the soviet was that of soviet employees (140 deputies, or 9.1% of the total), with the metal workers second with 121 (7.9%) deputies, railway workers third with 116 (7.6%), and then the textile workers with 72 deputies (4.7%). In 1918 the textile and metal unions had shared first place, and the

33. KM, cols.42, 46, 48.

change reflects the decline in industry and the increased importance of bureaucratic workers.<sup>34</sup>

One measure of the difference between the soviet of 1917 and that of 1920 was the disappearance of the rank and file soldier from the soviet. Of the 149 Red Army deputies in March 1920 93 were instructors, 8 were in officer training, and of the other 18 a large proportion were militiamen.<sup>35</sup> The abolition of the soldiers' soviet in November 1917 and of the soldiers' section in March 1918 deprived the soldiery, and hence the peasantry, of any organised participation in Moscow's political life.

During the civil war the Moscow soviet became an even younger body than it had been in 1918. The median age fell from 33 in 1918 to just under 30 in 1920, and the single largest age group was no longer the 31-35 year olds (34% in 1918 to 25% in 1920) but those aged between 26-30 (24% in 1918 to 33% in 1920).<sup>36</sup> The percentage of women remained low at the 4% mark, with the exception of the rise to 9% in March 1920, a sign of the buoyant state of the MK female worker department at the time. The proportion of those who had undergone repression before February 1917 fell from 64% in 1918 to 54% in 1920.<sup>37</sup>

b. The raion soviets

By October 1917 the majority of the raion soviets were dominated by the Bolsheviki, and their hold was consolidated by elections held soon after the revolution.<sup>38</sup> Further elections in

34. KM, cols. 40-2, 44-6, 50.

35. KM, col.48.

36. KM, cols. 39-41, 47.

37. KM, cols.39, 46, 49.

38. No overall figures are available but the Bolshevik dominance

April 1918, held in conjunction with those to the city soviet, gave the Bolsheviks 72.4% of the seats.<sup>39</sup> By July 1920 1209 (67%) of the 1800 raion soviet deputies were Bolsheviks.<sup>40</sup> The fall in the percentage indicates that non-Bolsheviks found it easier to get elected to the raion soviets than to the carefully controlled city soviet.

The peculiarity of Moscow's raion soviets was that up to mid-1918 they acted as the factory committee councils in lieu of a city-wide council of the type that existed in Petrograd. This was consistent with the general pattern of decentralised politics typical of Moscow. The raion soviets retained a fluidity in their practice that reflected their origins. For instance, when elections were held to the Basmannyi raion soviet EC towards the end of July 1918 its 15 members (all communists) were not elected by a simple plenary session of the soviet but by a joint meeting of the party RK, various activists, and the old EC.<sup>41</sup>

With the absorption of the factory committees into the trade union structure from early 1918, and the raion soviet control commissions into the economic councils from mid-1918, they lost their main role, though retained certain popular control

can be illustrated by the election to the Presnenskii raion soviet on 23 November 1917. Out of 94 deputies 83 were Bolsheviks, 8 Mensheviks, and 3 SRs. The EC was comprised of 27 Bolsheviks, 3 Mensheviks, and 1 SR, Moskovskii soviet za 10 let, pp.73-4.

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39. A total of 467 deputies were elected: 338 Bolsheviks, 42 Mensheviks, 28 LSRs, and 59 others, D.A. Tolstikh, Deyatel'nost' Moskovskoi partiinoi organizatsii po sozdaniyu organov Sovetskoi vlasti v Moskve (oktyabr'1917 - iyun'1918g.), M. 1958, p.407.

40. Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., p.3.

41. P, 20 July 1918.

(see below) and administrative functions. During the civil war the raion soviets entered into a long decline, and were increasingly restricted to acting as the local agents of the city soviet. The Moscow soviet EC meeting of 16 October 1918 formalised the relationship by decreeing that the raion soviets were directly subordinate to the city EC.<sup>42</sup> Their political weakness was exacerbated by the fact that the majority of their deputies were simultaneously members of the central soviet and therefore could not devote themselves, or indeed their loyalties, to the raions. In effect, the raion soviets were simply the local departments of the city soviet.

The raion soviets undertook a range of municipal functions in their districts, and acted as yet another reservoir of cadres to be sent into state posts. According to Zelenskii many of the EC members in the soviets, and he cited the 15 elected in Basmannyi raion, were taken straight from the shopfloor and set to organisational work. Their inexperience, he argued, rendered their first efforts ineffective.<sup>43</sup> The staffs of the raion soviets expanded in line with the general expansion of administrative offices of the time. By mid-1919, for example, the soviet for the small Butyrskii raion employed 700 people.<sup>44</sup> From mid-1919 strenuous efforts were made to decrease staff numbers,<sup>45</sup> but the attempts met with little success. At the end of 1919 certain departments under the raion soviets were abolished, others curtailed (such as their economic departments),

42. VIMS, 17 October 1918.

43. VIMS, 23 July 1918.

44. VIMS, 14 June 1919.

45. VIMS, 21 June 1919.

or transferred to the central soviet (e.g., statistics).<sup>46</sup> as part of the attempts to reduce duplication and to cut down on staff levels.

The raion soviets as much as the city soviet saw the centre of power shift from the plena to the executive bodies. Between February and September 1919, for instance, the Butyrskii raion soviet met in plenary session only 10 times (about once a month), while the EC had met 18 times and the presidium 44 times.<sup>47</sup> The raion soviets joined in the general chorus complaining about the lack of activists at their disposal. By all accounts they were poorly organised and by 1920 politically moribund. Ignatov described the condition of the Gorodskoi raion soviet on the eve of new elections in July 1920. In February 1920 out of the 306 members of the raion soviet 229 (three-quarters) were also members of the city soviet.<sup>48</sup> The 229 represented the larger plants and institutions in the raion, while the other 77 represented the smaller places, of which there were many in the raion, leaving the majority unrepresented. The last elections to the raion soviet had taken place at the end of 1918 and since then the majority of deputies had lost contact with their constituencies. The 229 devoted themselves to the city soviet, and therefore the raion soviet met only rarely. Only 40 deputies had attended its last session.<sup>49</sup>

46. VIMS, 15 November 1919.

47. VIMS, 12 September 1919.

48. Out of 113,021 eligible only 48.3% had voted, KM, cols.49-50; KT, 17 July 1920.

49. KT, 2 July 1920. In the July elections 304 deputies were returned from 121 enterprises by 49,702 voters (less than 50% of those eligible): 238 communists, 63 non-party, and 3 anarchists. The 15 Mensheviks failed to be returned, KT, 1 August 1920.

During the civil war the raion soviets were undermined as political centres as part of the general pattern of the decline in raion-based democracy. They lost their economic and workers' control functions, power was concentrated in their executive bodies, and their links with the local working class became tenuous. They became the local administrative agencies for the city soviet.

The absence of a Bolshevik municipal programme independent of the general aims of the Bolshevik movement provided the context for the rapid undermining of municipal politics after October 1917. As we have seen, the Moscow soviet's economic functions were weakened with the development of the centralised economic system. At the same time, in place of the hectic municipal politics of 1917 in which the Moscow soviet and the raion soviets, the city дума and the raion dumy, participated, after the revolution the soviets became the unique form of municipal political expression. Limited by the Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) and by centralised decision-making in general, as in supply policy, the Moscow soviet and the raion soviets became integrated into the general state system which allowed them little autonomy. Within the soviets the Bolsheviks organised as a caucus and in effect decision-making was removed from the plena as the party committees directed soviet work through their dominance in soviet executive bodies. By the end of war communism the Moscow soviets had become moribund as far as mass participatory democracy was concerned. As we shall see below, however, there were attempts at reviving them within the context of war communism.

## 2. The one-party state

Following the demonstration against the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly on 5 January 1918 the Moscow soviet EC on 29 January 1918 deprived the SRs of the right to participate in the soviet's executive bodies.<sup>50</sup> The 14 June 1918 VTsIK session decided to exclude the Mensheviks and SRs from the central soviets, and recommended that local soviets followed suit.<sup>51</sup> The MK on 17 June condemned both parties and resolved on their expulsion from the soviet, a move confirmed by the city party conference on 22 June.<sup>52</sup> At this time the Menshevik organisation in the city consisted of no more than 600 members.<sup>53</sup> Now the soviet plenum on 25 June deprived the Menshevik fraction, led by I.A. Isuv and B. Kibrik, and the SRs of the rights of 'soviet parties' and expelled their representatives from the executive bodies of the soviet, and the Right and Centre SRs were expelled from the soviet altogether.<sup>54</sup> They were also expelled from the raion soviets. The LSRs had resigned from the government following the Brest peace in March 1918, and following their abortive uprising in Moscow in early July the Moscow soviet plenum on 23 July expelled the majority from the soviet and in new elections all the other parties (except one LSR) were eliminated from its executive bodies (see above). From this

50. KM, col.20.

51. The same decree ordered the dissolution of the workers' conferences in which the Mensheviks played an active part.

52. Uprochenie, pp.46-7.

53. L.M. Spirin, Klassy i partii v grazhdanskoi voine v Rossii (1917-1920gg.), M. 1968, pp.157-8.

54. KM, col.7; Uprochenie, pp.49-51.



point the SRs of whatever colour played no significant part in the soviet. The beginning of the civil war therefore saw the overwhelming hegemony of the Bolsheviks established over the representative institutions in Moscow.

In the factories the Mensheviks continued their struggle for the independence of the trade unions and to preserve workers' living standards even though they had lost their voice in the proceedings of the Moscow soviet's executive bodies. The further history of Menshevik participation in the soviet went through several phases but was marked by bitter splits within the Menshevik party itself. On the right wing were defensists such as Liber, who at a session of the Moscow oblast committee of Mensheviks on 23 July 1918 proposed a successful resolution which recognised that the anti-Bolshevik movement was very wide and contained pogromists. Nevertheless, the resolution argued, 'in the interests of the working class and democracy' the Mensheviks should continue to participate in it.<sup>55</sup> The left wing was represented by internationalists like O.A. Ermanskii, who fought for dialogue with the Bolsheviks from the point of view of 'Marxist realism'.<sup>56</sup> A gradual leftening of the Menshevik TsK and Dan personally took place over the summer of 1918. Martov's internationalist view influenced the 14 November 1918 Menshevik decision<sup>57</sup> to withdraw support from the anti-Bolshevik struggle and to agitate 'within the framework of soviet forms and the constitution' for the democratisation and softening of the

55. VIMS, 13 August 1918.

56. O.A. Ermanskii, Iz perezhitogo, M/L. 1927, p.188.

57. P, 19 November 1918.

harshest features of war communism.<sup>58</sup> The decision was influenced by the German revolution which, the resolution stated, 'made possible a link between the revolutionary Russian proletariat and the proletariat of Germany'.<sup>59</sup>

Despite heated discussion in the MK over the readmittance of the Mensheviks to the Moscow soviet the opponents gathered only 5 votes<sup>60</sup> and in early December <sup>the MK</sup> welcomed the lifting of restrictions on the Mensheviks (and LSRs) on 30 November 1918.<sup>61</sup> In the raions, however, the change was greeted with less enthusiasm, which was not surprising considering the passion unleashed by the red terror at the time. It was only after three meetings of the Sokol'nicheskii party organisation that a majority could be coaxed in favour of the change.<sup>62</sup> As the Bolshevik victories in the civil war multiplied the Mensheviks in Moscow leftened further. A party conference in April 1920 adopted a set of 'April Theses' which rather contradictorily accepted the necessity for a dictatorship of the proletariat but did not go so far as to acquiesce to the 'terrorist minority'

58. Ermanskii, p.186.

59. VIMS, 22 November 1918. For Martov's views see Israel Getzler, Martov: A Political Biography, CUP 1967, pp.173ff.

60. Rudolf Schlesinger, History of the Communist Party of the USSR Past and Present, Orient Longman 1977, p.145.

61. P, 11 December 1918. Both this resolution and Lenin argued that the petty bourgeois intelligentsia could be readmitted to the soviets if they were prepared to defend the country (Lenin PSS, vol.37, pp.188-97). It was over the question of 'revolutionary defensism' and the nature of democracy in the Soviet dictatorship of the proletariat that Lenin wrote his strong attack on Kautsky at this time in 'The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky', Lenin PSS, vol.37, pp.237-338.

62. P, 12 December 1918. Resolutions against readmitting the Mensheviks were also passed in the Presnenskii and Basmannyi RPOs, P, 28 December 1918.

(i.e., the Bolsheviks) within that dictatorship.<sup>63</sup> On 20 April 1920 Martov announced to the Moscow soviet that the Mensheviks had decided to break off all links with the II International.<sup>64</sup>

Gimpel'son has argued that the one-party state was finally introduced in 1920-21 with the break up of the Menshevik and SR parties,<sup>65</sup> and that it was only introduced as a result of the implacable behaviour of the other parties during the civil war.<sup>66</sup> On both counts his argument is dubious. On the first, one would have to look to 1922-3 for the consolidation of the one-party system, if one accepts his argument, with the final destruction of the non-Bolshevik parties and the elimination of their representation in the soviets. The mere presence of non-Bolshevik deputies in the Moscow soviet, which lingered on up to 1923, does not indicate the existence of a multi-party system since they in no way threatened the dominating role of the Bolsheviks, and had not done so since mid-1918. On the second point, the Mensheviks had rallied to the defence of the Soviet state, if not regime, in November 1918. This had been explicitly welcomed by Lenin, when few friends could be found, for the limited tactical objective of winning the war and did not signify that non-Bolshevik groups had any role to play other than a supporting one in the Soviet system of government. In parallel with the etiolation of non-Bolshevik opposition in the Moscow soviet during the civil war, the end of the war saw the

63. Ermanskii, pp.191-4.

64. KT, 21 April 1920.

65. E.G. Gimpel'son, 'Iz istorii obrazovaniya odnopartiinoi sistemy v SSSR', VI KPSS, 11, 1965, p.30.

66. E.G. Gimpel'son, 'Kak slozhilas' sovetskaya forma proletarskogo gosudarstva', VI KPSS, 9, 1967, pp.14-15.

elimination of the vestiges of non-Bolshevik influence in Moscow's factories.<sup>67</sup> The creation of the Soviet model of the one-party state required the elimination of organised opposition both in the soviets and in the working class, and the attempts to achieve this during the civil war were crowned with success on the return of peace.

### 3. The party and the soviets

#### a. Theory

By arguing for the destruction of the bourgeois state and for its replacement by a system based on soviets, Lenin, notably in 'Letters from Afar' and 'State and Revolution', was able to maintain a theoretical distinction between the workers' state and the revolutionary party. The working class would participate in the everyday running of the state through the soviets, while the party's role was to act as the advanced minority guiding the development of the workers' state. The party in this theory was not intended to become the embryo of the new state but its guiding conscious head.

While this position was maintained in theory after October 1917, in practice the party, by taking the majority of the most important posts in the state/soviet apparatus, became prey to the danger of absorption in the new state machinery. As mentioned,

67. Bellis argued that in Lenin's thinking it was axiomatic that there was 'an organic relationship between the Bolshevik party and the Soviet working class', (Paul Bellis, Marxism and the USSR: The Theory of Proletarian Dictatorship and the Marxist Analysis of Soviet Society, Macmillan 1979, p.43). By definition this discounted any role for the non-Bolshevik parties, and even as a 'loyal opposition' they were rendered superfluous by the victory in the civil war.

after October it was the party, and not the state, that was in danger of withering away. With the development of the 'May programme' the problem of the relationship between the party and the soviets, and between the party organisations and the soviet fractions, was once again starkly posed. By the end of the civil war the balance had turned and the leading role of the party was established.

The problematical nature of the party's relations with the soviets was partly a reflection of the smallness of the proletariat in a vast peasant country. As Sorin put it in 1918:

...The party is always and everywhere superior to the soviets...The soviets represent labouring democracy in general, and its interests, and in particular the interests of the petty-bourgeois peasantry, do not always coincide with the interests of the proletariat.<sup>68</sup>

Therefore, according to the Left Communists, the party was the guardian of an interest higher than that of the soviets and hence was justified in maintaining a dominance over them. The dispensability of the soviets for the Bolsheviks had been illustrated by the abandonment of the slogan of all power to the soviets following the July events in 1917. With the development of a massive bureaucratic apparatus in 1918 a further reason was adduced for party dominance over the soviets. As a MOB letter of September 1918 put it:

The party must be placed as the controlling, leading, and guiding force over the soviets to avoid a breach (razlozhenie) between party workers and the helplessness of the state apparatus.<sup>69</sup>

68. Kommunist, 4, June 1918, p.7.

69. Perepiska, vol.IV, p.256.

Both the absence of working class hegemony in society and the development of a vast bureaucracy propelled the party to play a tutelary role over the soviets.

The attempt to maintain the vitality of the soviet plenum while at the same time controlling the soviet through the party fraction, itself controlled by the party committee outside the soviet, proved irreconcilable. The Bolshevik fractions became the de facto kernel of the soviets and this split was accentuated during the civil war as the ECs and presidia, as we have seen in the case of the Moscow soviets, replaced the functions of the soviet as a whole. In his polemic against Kautsky Lenin wrote:

The soviets are the direct organisation of the toiling and exploited masses themselves, which helps them to organise and administer their own state in every possible way.<sup>70</sup>

The work however failed to analyse the forms that the guiding role of the party would take, which was Kautsky's central argument:

Despite the pretensions of being the dictatorship of the proletariat it has become from the very beginning<sup>71</sup> the dictatorship of one party within the proletariat.

As Bellis has pointed out, the fundamental lacuna in Lenin's thinking of this period is the lack of an analysis of the relationship between the party and the soviets as the organs of popular power.<sup>72</sup> This deficiency is not restricted to Lenin alone. In their ABC of Communism Bukharin and Preobrazhenskii in

70. Lenin PSS, vol.37, p.257.

71. Karl Kautsky, The Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Ann Arbor 1964, p.46.

72, Bellis, p.39, who states that Lenin's only detailed reference to the question is in 'Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power', Lenin PSS, vol.34, pp.287-339.

1919 barely mention the communist party at all. Everything is left to the working class organised in the soviets and its state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, while the party is only discussed in relation to the seizure of power and as one of the institutions at the base of the soviet system.<sup>73</sup> It is perhaps in this that the utopianism of the work, described by E.H. Carr in his introduction, is most marked rather than in the novel economic relationships described so enthusiastically.

With the formation of the III International the Soviet experience was projected onto the world stage and to countries where the proletariat was more hegemonic. The rationale for party control over social institutions was codified by the II congress of the III International in July 1920:

As the organised advance guard of the working class the Communist Party answers equally for the economic, political, and spiritual needs of the working class. It must be the soul of the trade unions, the soviets, and all other proletarian organisations...For the soviets to fulfil their historic mission there must be a Communist Party strong enough not to 'adapt' itself to the soviets but to exercise on them a decisive influence, to force them not to adapt themselves<sup>74</sup> to the bourgeoisie and official social democracy...

The soviets therefore could not be left to express the interests of the working class on their own, but required a body external to them to ensure that they carried out the policies deemed correct. The reality of these propositions was tested during the civil war.

73. N. Bukharin and E. Preobrazhenskii, The ABC of Communism, Penguin 1969, pp.129, 231, 236-7.

74. II kongress kommunisticheskogo internatsionala: stenograficheskii otchet, M. 1920, p.574.

b. Practice

The principle of party control permitted conflicting interpretations. The initial problem after October 1917 was the relationship to be established between the party fractions in the soviets and the party committees. From the first the caucus nature of the Bolshevik group in the Moscow soviet was stressed. A resolution adopted by them and published on 22 March 1917 argued that the Bolshevik fraction should act as a group and not as a collection of individuals.<sup>75</sup> This was repeated by the MOB on 17 May 1917 which called for the formation of Bolshevik fractions in soviets to ensure that the party line was carried out in them.<sup>76</sup> However, the latent rivalry between the fractions and the party committees had already surfaced in 1917. A MOB resolution of summer 1917, for example, gave the fractions equal status with the committees, and proposed mutual representation as the link between them, with the fraction establishing itself as a separate organisation with its own executive bodies, secretary and finances.<sup>77</sup>

A few days after the October revolution the MK decreed that the Moscow soviet EC had to give it a copy of the agenda of its meetings, and that all major questions to be discussed by the

75. Velikaya oktyabr'skaya sotsialisticheskaya revolyutsiya. Dokumenty i materialy. Revolyutsionnoe dvizhenie v Rossii posle sverzheniya samoderzhaviya, M. 1957, p.108.

76. Pod.i Pob., p.130. The fractions elected an executive bureau, and the work of both was governed by a statute. That adopted by the Bolshevik fraction of the Moscow soldiers' soviet in mid-September 1917 specified that the bureau would consist of 3 people, would meet twice a week, and would be elected for a term of 3 months, O.G. Obichkin, Ustavy mestnykh organizatsii RSDRP, M. 1976, p.132.

77. Pod.i pob., p.130.



plenum were to be considered first by the EC meeting with an MK representative.<sup>78</sup> By mid-1918 the problem was no longer one of ensuring party direction over the soviets, but one of regulating the relations between the local party organisation and the party fractions themselves, and above all to ensure party control over party members working in soviet institutions. The July 1918 MPO statute insisted that all MK decisions were obligatory for fraction members, that all responsible postings in the central or raion soviets were to be made with the agreement of the corresponding party committee, and that agendas were to be shown in good time to the committees.<sup>79</sup> At the end of July 1918 Boris Volin (Fradkin), one of the key figures in framing Bolshevik municipal policy, raised the question in the light of the resurgence of the party. It was absolutely inadmissible, he argued, for a party member to speak in a soviet as a soviet deputy rather than a party member: 'Every party member must above all be a party member, and only then a member of the fraction of one or another soviet institution'.<sup>80</sup>

In practice many party members did not find it easy to choose between the soviets and the party. The torn loyalties often engendered bitter conflicts on a personal level and led to expulsions from the party.<sup>81</sup> The increasing conflicts between the soviet fractions and the party committees in Moscow over the

78. M.S. Koloditskii, 'Bor'ba Moskovskoi partiinoi organizatsii za prevrashchenie sovetov v organy vosstaniya i diktatury proletariata (iyul'-sentyabr' 1917g.)', Avtoref. diss., M. 1967, p.14.

79. Ustav MPO 1918, p.7.

80. P, 27 July 1918.

81. P, 18 September 1918.

summer of 1918, a result of the resurgence of the party, led to the convocation of a general meeting of communists working in soviet institutions in the city on 13 November 1918. The latter's interests had been articulated by an all-city fraction bureau, acting not only as a centralised form of Bolshevik supervision over the general work of the soviets and institutions, but also clearly developing 'interests' of its own. The meeting decided to dissolve the bureau, ostensibly because of a shortage of activists, and its functions were transferred to the MK in the centre and the RKs in the localities, who were urged to guide the work of the raion soviets.<sup>82</sup> Its abolition was consonant with the increasingly restricted definition of the role of the cells. The bureau had stood as an intermediary between the soviets and the party committees and during the civil war it was precisely this sort of body that was swept away as lines of command were shortened.

The party's enhanced tutelary role over the soviets in the raions was decribed by the Butyrskii RK's report for late 1918:

[The RK's] enactments are now carried out by the soviet without any dispute, whereas at first, after the October revolution, there was much friction between the raion [soviet] EC and the party committee. After the reorganisation of the soviet, and its unification<sup>83</sup> with the raion дума, conflicts were gradually reduced.

The report for the Blagushe-Lefortovo RK for May 1919 stressed the control of the party committee over the raion soviet. The committee had intervened in the affairs of the soviet's education department on the grounds that its work had

82. P, 22 August, 10 September, 19 November 1918.

83. P, 5 January 1919.

'suffered from a lack of competent party workers and insufficient ideological leadership'.<sup>84</sup> By the end of 1919 the Basmannyi RK could claim complete control over the raion soviet:

Not a single appointment, not a single transfer, in the work of the departments, not a single question, passed by the raion committee without its sanction and approval.<sup>85</sup>

The MK was also proud of the degree of control it exercised over the Moscow soviet. In July 1920, for instance, four MK members were on the soviet's presidium, and a fifth, Kamenev, was chairman of the soviet, and there were in addition frequent joint meetings of the MK and the presidium.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, the great prestige of the Moscow soviet and the calibre of its leaders to some extent shielded it from the type of minute supervision exercised by the RKs over the raion soviets. This was commented on at the end of 1920: 'In the raions full monolithic unity of work, but in the centre the Moscow Committee and the Moscow Soviet with an unclear definition of their relationship'.<sup>87</sup> There still remained a residual sense that the soviets and the party were to work in tandem, not in 'monolithic unity', each with their own sphere of responsibilities. Kamenev, for example, had been chairman of the Moscow soviet since August 1918 but he joined the MK only in May 1920. By the end of 1920, with the creation of a single MK elected at a conference for a fixed term, the dominance of the party as the supreme political body in the city was clearly outlined.

84. P, 11 July 1919.

85. VIMS, 18 November 1920.

86. Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., p.4.

87. KM, col.658.

c. The Democratic Centralists

By the end of 1918 criticism of the trends in the relations between party committees and fractions, between the centre and the localities, and the general problem of bureaucratism, developed into a wide debate. The criticism was led by the Democratic Centralists (DCs), based largely in the Moscow guberniya party and soviet organisations.<sup>88</sup> Their leading figure was T.V. Sapronov, the chairman of the guberniya soviet EC from October 1917 to the end of 1919 and member of the guberniya party committee (MGK), together with Minkov, secretary of the MGK, Ivanov, and other members of these organisations. In 1917 the Bolsheviks here had enjoyed overwhelming support both among the workers and peasantry, and since then the party and soviet organisations had worked in particularly close harmony. It was the model of relationships established in the guberniya that this group sought to generalise to the rest of the country, and in particular to the city of Moscow.

A joint session of the MGK and the guberniya soviet EC on 26 December 1918, chaired by Sapronov, continued the attack launched at the XI Moscow guberniya party conference (18-19 December 1918). A motion was passed criticising the 'bureaucratic centralism' and 'petty tutelage' of the centre in interfering in

88. It is difficult to talk of a single Democratic Centralist group. In early 1921 Myasnikov identified five main tendencies: the general party opposition dissatisfied with the party centre over a range of issues, represented by Osinskii; a soviet opposition focusing on the question of the relationship between the 'centre' and the 'localities', represented by Sapronov; a group which claimed that the party committees had usurped the rights of the soviet fractions, represented above all by a group of Muscovites led by Ignatov; the Ukrainian 'independence' group; and various others dissatisfied with the party TsK, Myasnikov, Izb.proiz., p.294.

the current affairs of the local soviets, and called for the rights of the localities to be respected.<sup>89</sup> A specially convened city party conference on 18 January 1919 was the scene of bitter debate over the relationship between central and local soviet institutions, and between the party committees and fractions in the soviets. Ignatov introduced a motion demanding changes to the Soviet Constitution, and in particular the liquidation of SNK in order to increase the authority of VTsIK, and for the increased autonomy of soviet fractions. He was supported by several members of the Moscow soviet EC and by a group of 'dissatisfied comrades from the raions'.<sup>90</sup> Since October 1918 Ignatov had no longer been a member of the soviet's presidium, but remained a member of the EC. He was also active in the Gorodskoi raion party and soviet structures. The theme of his long oppositional career was the defence of the localities, which in Moscow meant above all the raions, and it was from this point of view that he now supported the DCs. Their argument insisted that the soviets were to be preserved as responsible political centres, and hence can be seen as a reaction against the changes inaugurated by the May programme.

I.V. Tsivtsivadze at the conference tried to mollify the opposition by admitting that some problems existed but blamed them only on certain 'inadequacies of the mechanism'. He insisted that the fractions were party cells, but put forward some mild reform proposals aimed at rejuvenating the soviet plenum and at giving the raion soviets more scope in decision-

89. VIII s"ezd RKP, p.543 n71.

90. P, 28 January 1919.

making.<sup>91</sup> In his contribution Lenin argued that only centralism could overcome the two great evils of bureaucracy and speculation. He accused the opposition of having discarded centralism in favour of localism (mestnichestvo).<sup>92</sup> The MK's conciliatory resolution was adopted, but its reform proposals remained a dead letter.

The weeks preceding the VIII party congress, as we have seen in Chapters 4 and 5, were marked by a series of conferences in which the condition of the party and other issues on the congress agenda were discussed. A TsK circular letter of 8 February 1919 developed Lenin's idea of centralism as the antidote to bureaucratism. Party control over its members in the state apparatus and periodic redistributions of members between party and state posts, and from region to region, would overcome both bureaucratism and localism, it was argued. The circular called for an influx of fresh cadres from the ranks of the party into the apparatus.<sup>93</sup> This was the line taken by the MK speakers on the eve of the conference. Although the MK position was adopted everywhere, advocates of a reform of soviet institutions gained significant support.<sup>94</sup> The 15 February MK resolution, as noted, took a moderate line but insisted on fraction subordination to party committees.

At the VIII congress in March 1919 the DCs continued their

91. P, 28 January 1919.

92. Lenin PSS, vol.37, pp.428-9.

93. Perepiska, vol.VI, p.58.

94. For example, at the 13 February 1919 Presnenskii delegate conference (P, 18 February 1919). The Lefortovskii RK supported the DC call for a reform of soviet institutions, P, 30 January 1919.

attack. Osinskii argued that the great problem was that instead of authority being clearly delineated decisions were being taken by, for instance, Lenin and Sverdlov in personal talks, and not by the full TsK.<sup>95</sup> This confusion prevailed at all levels of the state and party hierarchy, they argued. Osinskii insisted that a Soviet government, as such, did not exist,<sup>96</sup> and Ignatov warned that the party should not take on the functions of the soviets.<sup>97</sup> The final resolution on this question insisted on the undisputed political dominance of the party over the soviets and that the fractions were to be absolutely subordinate to the party committees.<sup>98</sup> The caveat that the party was to 'guide' and not to 'substitute' for the soviets was given no institutional expression and thus remained a pious expression of principle. In practice the resolution tackled none of the substantive issues raised by the opposition, and indeed exacerbated them.

The DC call for a revision to the constitution to incorporate the experience of running the country since mid-1918 was an attempt to provide a legal framework for the rights of all parts of the Soviet governmental machinery both in the centre and the locality. Their 'localism' reflected attempts not so much to limit the powers of central authority as to define them. The existing confusion above all worked to the disadvantage of the localities and to the benefit of the centre. To this day Soviet governmental practice is ruled more by convention than any legal definition of powers.

Throughout 1919 the DCs, ensconced in the guberniya party and

95. VIII s"ezd RKP, pp.166-7.

96. ibid., p.192.

97. ibid., p.199.

98. ibid., p.429.

soviet organisations, continued their demands for effective central leadership combined with competent local soviets. At the XVI guberniya conference (November 1919) Sapronov called for the rights and duties of all organisations to be clearly delineated in a revised national constitution.<sup>99</sup> The new party statute adopted by the VIII party conference in December 1919, however, rejected the guberniya conference's draft amendment clearly stating that local party committees were not to interfere in the current work of local soviets and their party fractions.<sup>100</sup> According to the final draft the territorial form of democratic centralism was to be the only one: all party activists in an area were to be subordinate to the party committee serving that area.<sup>101</sup>

At the VIII conference Sapronov defended not so much the rights of the local soviets as those of their ECs (ispolkomy):

In the war years I personally was in favour of the temporary suspension of ispolkom department collegia, but considered it only a temporary expedient. There is now a tendency to make this measure permanent.<sup>102</sup>

The ispolkomy in his view were to be the horizontal linkage at the local level (VTsIK was to perform this function in the centre) to prevent soviet power becoming 'a thousand separate pillars'.<sup>103</sup> Collegiate management in the soviets and the economy was to act as the link with the masses.<sup>104</sup> As we have seen the collegia in the Moscow soviets had been undermined during the civil war. But still Sapronov did not analyse the reasons for

99. XVI Mosk. gubpartkonf., p.23.

100. ibid., p.21.

101. VIII konf. RKP, pp.191-9.

102. VIII konf.RKP, p.67.

103. ibid., p.130.

104. ibid., pp.68-9.



the decline in the effectiveness of the soviet plena. As Mgeladze, one of the advocates of moderate reform in early 1919 in the MK and now in Saratov, put it, the republic was becoming one of ispolkomy and not of soviets.<sup>105</sup>

By the IX party congress Saprnov and the Democratic Centralists as a whole had become more critical of the whole trend of civil war developments. Saprnov warned that a dictatorship of the party chinovnichestvo was being established as elections were replaced by appointments and transfers, and he went further: 'There is no need to talk about the dictatorship of the proletariat, about the self-activity of the worker masses. There is no self-activity'. The machine would not save the revolution, he argued.<sup>106</sup> The DC critique had now advanced beyond their earlier proposals on the eve of the VIII congress, where the 'strict' centralists could have agreed with the substance of their criticisms of the shortcomings of party organisation, to a position which viewed the development of the party machine with increasing alarm. The DCs had initially attempted to combat bureaucracy by bureaucratic means by arguing that improving the mechanism would ensure an improved democratic centralism. By 1920 the debate on the soviet system had to begin with a debate on reform within the party, and this debate took place from mid-1920 (Part III).

105. ibid., pp.116-7.

106. IX s"ezd RKP, pp.52-3, 139.

#### 4. Bureaucracy

##### a. General characteristics

On the eve of the VIII party congress Lenin had argued that centralisation was the only way to combat bureaucratism. The congress itself resolved that party supervision over the state and its members working in soviet structures could act as a check against its development. Hence the general awareness of the dangers of bureaucratism reinforced the party's claim to supremacy. The term itself during the civil war took on several meanings, but at the centre of interpretations of bureaucracy in this period lay the questions of the desired relationship between the centre and the localities, between the soviets and the working class, and the relationships between all levels of the party and state apparatuses. The bureaucratism of the party itself signified the use of administrative methods and the increasingly formal nature of inner-party democracy.

The Left Communists in 1918 provided the inspiration for a series of later critiques of the type of state that the dictatorship of the proletariat was becoming. The respite period was to combine concessions to capitalists under the supervision of a strong socialist state apparatus, but the apparatus designed for this purpose was transferred to the succeeding period of war communism. Already the result of the first period, as the left saw it, was the stifling of the self-activity of the working class as a whole in the management of the state. One aspect of this was the use of so-called bourgeois specialists in the civilian, economic and military spheres. Another was centralisation and bureaucratisation, in the sense of power

moving away from the floor of popular assemblies.<sup>107</sup> As the left put it:

Giving wide autonomy to local soviets and no longer diminishing their authority by commissars sent by central power, Soviet power and the party of the proletariat must find their support in the class self-activity of the wide masses,<sup>108</sup> on whose development every effort must be concentrated.

Instead, the Bolsheviks smashed the old state but rapidly created their own bureaucratic and centralised apparatus to wage the political, and from mid-1918, the economic offensive against the bourgeoisie. Already on arriving in Moscow in March 1918 the government had looked at ways of reducing the state apparatus, above all by shedding staff. In fact, most departments on arrival from Petrograd immediately began to expand. One important factor in this was the unification of the newly arrived commissariats with the Moscow oblast commissariats.<sup>109</sup> As the functions of the state expanded so did the bureaucracy, swollen above all by the state's involvement in running industry.

The great expansion in the number of office workers took place before August 1918, and thereafter, despite the many campaigns to reduce their number, their specific weight in the falling population remained remarkably constant. In August 1918

107. Marc Ferro suggests that the bureaucratisation of the soviets began in 1917, 'The Birth of the Soviet Bureaucratic System', in Reconsiderations on the Russian Revolution, Banff 1976, pp.113-20.

108. Kommunist, 1, p.9.

109. A.M. Anikst, Vospominaniya o Lenine, M. 1933, p.8. In February 1918 a Moscow oblast sovnarkom (MOSNK) had been formed which duplicated the central ones right down to having its own foreign affairs commissariat. After a bitter struggle, in which the Moscow soviet, jealous of its own prerogatives, sided with the central authorities, MOSNK was dissolved in May 1918.

231,000 people in the city were employed in offices, representing 13.7% of the total population and 29.6% of all those employed.<sup>110</sup> By May 1919 some reductions in the staff of central institutions were compensated by an increase in the numbers employed by local offices, the latter rising from 83,866 in 1918 to 98,000.<sup>111</sup> Office workers at that time represented 16% of total population, and 31% of the independent population. By 1920 local institutions employed 80,000, and the general number of office workers had decreased by about 15-20% over 1918, but they still represented about a third of the total independent population in the city.<sup>112</sup> At the same time, as mentioned, the proportion of white collar workers to manual workers in industry increased. During the civil war, therefore, Moscow became dominated by a bureaucratic apparatus which served both the city and the whole country.

In the first phase of Soviet power there was a tendency to regard the participation of the working class in state structures as sufficient evidence of the absence of bureaucratism. In other words, class composition was considered the main criterion for determining the level of bureaucratism. According to the industrial census of 31 August 1918, in Moscow out of 123,578 workers 4191 (3.4%) were involved in management or some sort of public organisation, 4112 of whom had been elected and 71 appointed.<sup>113</sup> With both the greatest concentration of

110. Lenin PSS, vol.45, p.250.

111. Dva goda diktatury proletariata, p.15; Stat. ezhegodnik, pp.46-7.

112. Lenin PSS, vol.42, pp.43, 47.

113. Chugaev, doc. no.52.

workers and the largest amount of offices Moscow's working class naturally provided the largest contingent for the new state apparatus. By mid-October 1918 out of 1800 workers in the Mikhel'son plant only 350 remained. The majority of the others were either in the countryside on political work or employed in soviet institutions.<sup>114</sup> Noting that the presidium of the Rogozhskii raion soviet was overwhelmed with work, a meeting of factory committees in the raion decided to send members to help.<sup>115</sup> A report of 10 October 1918 claimed that out of the 900 workers in the AMO car plant in the same raion 100 were involved in some sort of public work, in the trade union, the factory committee or control commission. This was cited as a disclaimer to Menshevik claims that 'we have a bureaucratic (chinovnik) state'.<sup>116</sup>

However, the initial enthusiasm was soon tempered by a growing awareness that the class content approach to the question of bureaucratism was insufficient. Nearly every issue of Moscow's evening paper from late 1918 carried examples of the bureaucratism affecting every aspect of the city's life. Among the multitude of examples was the problem of movement in and out of the city. A worker, for instance, going on a health cure would have to wait two or three days in endless queues to obtain the necessary documents from the various departments of the commission for the evacuation of Moscow, by which time his or her health would no doubt have been further impaired.<sup>117</sup> Ironic references were frequently made to the official explanation that

114. Kommunar, 18 October 1918. 115. Kommunar, 9 October 1918.

116. Chugaev, p.60.

117. VIMS, 3 January 1919.

these were only 'small defects in our mechanism'.<sup>118</sup> Victor Serge described his impression of the bureaucracy in Moscow in early 1919:

Here committees were piled on top of Councils, and Managements on top of Commissions. Of this apparatus, which seemed to me to function largely in a void, wasting three-quarters of its time on unrealisable projects, I at once formed the worst possible impression.<sup>119</sup>

The prevalence of bureaucracy, of committees and commissions whose value decreased as their acronyms lengthened, permitted, and indeed encouraged, endless permutations of corrupt practices which we can no more than mention. The phenomenon of sovmetitel'stvo (carrying on several jobs at the same time) reached epidemic proportions, especially among the bourgeois specialists in institutions. Some, it was alleged, worked in up to four places and in each they were paid more than workers and received rations at each place.<sup>120</sup> The accusations of corruption ranged from the style of living of communist functionaries to bribe-taking by minor officials.<sup>121</sup>

Even before engaging in his 'last struggle' Lenin wrote on 2 February 1921 that 'The population of Moscow is being bloated by employees' and urged that strict measures be taken to prevent further expansion.<sup>122</sup> In November 1920 a plan had been drafted to transfer 10,000 out of Moscow's 200,000 employees to

118. E.g., VIMS, 28 January 1919.

119. Serge, p.74.

120. VIMS, 6 March 1919.

121. Berkman, for instance, mentions the corrupt practices of the Moscow soviet's housing department in 1920, Berkman, The Bolshevik Myth, p.308.

122. Lenin PSS, vol.52, p.65.

Petrograd in order to ease the housing crisis<sup>123</sup> and to dilute the concentration of 'Moscow bureaucrats'.<sup>124</sup> These measures proved futile and by July 1921 their numbers had swollen to 228,000,<sup>125</sup> and by October 1922 to 243,000.<sup>126</sup>

In his political report to the XI party congress in March 1922 Lenin emphasised the battle between the two cultures, socialist and bureaucratic petty-bourgeois, represented respectively by the active party workers and the state bureaucracy:

If we take Moscow with its 4700 communists in responsible positions, and if we take that huge bureaucratic machine, that gigantic heap, we must ask: who is directing whom? I doubt very much whether it can truthfully be said that the communists are directing that heap. To tell the truth, they are not directing, they are being directed.<sup>127</sup>

From Table 17 it can be seen that in August 1920 of the 2629 responsible party workers in soviet institutions only 18% were from the working class. If we compare the total number of party activists with the number of employees they represented only about 1.3% of the total. Communists in soviet offices (8164) represented barely 5% of the total but constituted 27.4% of party membership in the city. While Lenin in his denunciation of Kautsky had extolled the mass participatory character of the soviet system the central question inevitably became one of

123. Lenin PSS, vol.42, p.43.

124. ibid., p.49.

125. KT, 2 July 1921.

126. Perepis' sluzhashchikh sovetskikh uchrezhdenii g. Moskvy 1922g., M. 1922, p.79.

127. Lenin PSS, vol.45, p.95.

trying to understand the roots of the bureaucratic phenomenon and to devise measures to reduce it.

During the civil war at least eight aspects can be discerned in contemporary analyses of the problem. The first, stressed by the Mensheviks but later used by the Bolsheviks, insisted that bureaucracy arose because of the attempt to impose an advanced structure onto a backward society:

Where socialism is not on a prepared soil, with an unprepared mechanism, it hinders the development of industry: the conditions are lacking. Bureaucratism springs from the desire to regulate as more and more commissions sprout...There is no proletariat, only dictatorship remains, and that not proletarian but an enormous bureaucratic mechanism that holds in its hands dead factories and plants.<sup>128</sup>

A second aspect, highlighted above all by the Left Communists, was the emphasis on the isolation of the Russian revolution from the culturally advanced proletariat of the West. Kritsman later theorised a third aspect, and indeed argued that the main degeneration of the proletarian-natural economy was precisely its bureaucratisation. This economy tried to rationalise social life, to destroy fetishism and the anarchic chaos of commodity relations. The drive for rationality led to a massive burgeoning of tasks which crystallised in the formation of countless commissions that all too frequently only established paper relationships between themselves.<sup>129</sup> In other words, he argued, the revolution had gone beyond what was economically expedient before economic, or even political, restructuring was

128. Dalin at the II SNKh congress in December 1918, Trudy II s"ezda SNKh, p.25.

129. Kritsman, p.152.



complete.<sup>130</sup>

A fourth and central theme of contemporary analyses of bureaucracy was to argue that it had been contrabanded into the soviet apparatus by carriers of the old Tsarist capitalist ideology - the old intelligentsia and specialists. For Kritsman the attempt to move too fast necessitated the massive absorption of the old technical intelligentsia leading to a contradiction between their role and their ideology.<sup>131</sup> Lenin, in particular, was fond of this interpretation. At the VIII congress, for instance, he argued that the source of the bureaucracy was the induction of the old Tsarist bureaucrats into the state machinery, sometimes using party membership to advance their careers.<sup>132</sup> The scale of the use of the specialists has already been noted (chapter 2), and in particular the expansion in staff numbers of the Moscow SNKh.

A related, and fifth, aspect of the problem was the bureaucratisation of the personnel in the structures themselves, the emergence of a Soviet chinovnichestvo which included workers and party members in addition to the traditional bureaucrats.<sup>133</sup> Towards the end of 1918 Ol'minskii, noting the above-mentioned growth of the VSNKh apparatus from 300 employees to 6000,

130. Moshe Lewin suggests that war communism was the 'nationalisation' of communism: the state became the carrier of socialism and the bureaucracy became the social basis of the regime (Moshe Lewin, 'The Social Background of Stalinism' in R.C. Tucker (ed), Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation, New York 1977, p.114). Elsewhere he quotes the warning uttered by Bukharin on the eve of the 'socialist offensive': 'If it (the state) takes too much upon itself, it is forced to create a colossal administrative apparatus', in Lewin, Political Undercurrents, p.63.

131. Kritsman, pp.147-8.

132. VIII s"ezd RKP, pp.21-2.

concluded that devoted communists, successful in the field of party work, were out of their element when faced with administration on a national level. The result had been a massive growth of the chinovnichestvo where the old bureaucrats were joined by the new.<sup>134</sup>

The last three analyses of bureaucracy centred on the working class and its failure to imbue the apparatus with the 'proletarian' spirit. Following Lenin's comments in early 1921 on the declassing of the proletariat it became popular to consider this as the main reason for bureaucratisation, although during the civil war the connection between the dispersion of the proletariat and bureaucracy had never figured as a major element in analyses. Trotsky, in particular, later argued that the bureaucracy arose out of the exhaustion and wastage of the working class as a result of the cumulative trials of the wars.<sup>135</sup>

In Moscow, where a significant working class remained, albeit with a changed composition, a seventh aspect of the problem was emphasised: the gulf between the soviet apparatus and those in the factories. There are three aspects to this point. The first was identified by Mgeladze at the VIII party congress: the workers advanced by the revolution were becoming isolated from their own class. The masses were no longer being drawn into communist construction.<sup>136</sup> N. Ovsyannikov made the point explicit soon after when he talked of a divorce between factory

133. Sorin, Kommunist, 4, p.7.      134. VIMS, 7 October 1918.

135. See, for example, Revolution Betrayed, p.292.

136. VIII s"ezd RKP, p.212.

workers and their representatives to the Moscow soviet:

Occupied by tasks of state construction working class communists have become isolated from the masses while working in ispolkomy<sup>137</sup> and commissariats and involved in bureaucratic tasks.

Both Mgeladze and Ovsyannikov pointed out the consequences of this. The former reported that in Moscow there were cases when the authorities did not dare to talk about supplies openly, that there was a tendency to ignore difficult questions at meetings (hence the diet of 'Wilson today, Wilson tomorrow' in agitprop meetings noted in Chapter 7), and because of this the masses were losing their faith in the party. In the Moscow factories, he stated, workers would listen to anybody except communists. There was a danger of communist power turning into a bureaucracy.<sup>138</sup> Ovsyannikov reported that 'provocateurs' now had free rein in the plants.<sup>139</sup> In other words, a large part of the working class that remained in the factories was becoming alienated from Bolshevik power.

The second aspect of this point was stressed by Lenin at the VIII congress: the low cultural level of the working class, which prevented the mass involvement of workers in management and thus led to bureaucratism.<sup>140</sup> Both Lenin and Osinskii tied this in with point 4. As Osinskii put it, the new state could only rely on a miniscule layer of able workers while the rest were backward because of the low cultural level of the country. Therefore, the old chinovnichestvo introduced bureaucratic methods into the Soviet state apparatus.<sup>141</sup>

137. VIMS, 17 April 1919.

138. VIII s"ezd RKP, pp.212-3.

139. VIMS, 17 April 1919.

140. VIII s"ezd RKP, pp.21-2.

141. ibid., p.188.

The third aspect of the breach between the working class and the apparatus was admitted by Boguslavskii later: the fear that applying frequent elections and genuine participatory democracy would take away experienced workers and replace them with novices who would take time to 'master the apparatus':

It must be said that this perfectly justified fear deprived us of the possibility of widely applying methods of shift (smeny) and significantly stimulated the formation of a layer of so-called 'soviet bureaucracy'.<sup>142</sup>

There was a fear that spontaneity and mass participation would reduce the efficiency of the apparatus, a classic bureaucratic response. It was over these three points that the Workers' Opposition developed their critique of bureaucratism and put forward reform plans. The Democratic Centralists, on the other hand, while agreeing with several of the points mentioned above, tended towards a more structural critique, our eighth point.

In Moscow the radical aspect of their views was advanced by Ignatov. He argued that the 'small defects' had grown into major ones not only because of sabotage or the vestiges of the past, but because of the inadequacies of the mechanisms themselves. Power had moved from the local soviets to the centre, he argued, and this centralism often appeared in a degenerated form provoking conflict between commissars and soviets.<sup>143</sup> He argued that the soviets were losing contact with the masses, and gave the explanation, as mentioned, that this was due to insufficient initiative being allowed to the soviets as the party, through democratic centralism, tended to substitute for the soviets.<sup>144</sup>

142. Moskovskii pechatnik, 1, 15 January 1921, p.4.

143. VIMS, 11 February 1919.

144. VIII s"ezd RKP, pp.198-9.

The response to the bureaucratisation of soviet power took a variety of forms. There were attempts to improve participation in the Moscow soviet; mass popular inspection was developed to check on the bureaucracy; but most important of all the theory became established that increased party control itself inured against bureaucratic degeneration. The problem of bureaucratism necessitated an understanding of the nature of bureaucracy itself, and while the analyses above made some attempts to do so, the development of a sui generis new model party-state bureaucracy was not grasped. The collective authors of a recent work have argued that on several grounds, including, as regards the soviets, the disappearance of the distinction between appointed and elected bodies, the Soviet-type apparatus, in the strictly Weberian sense, cannot be considered a bureaucracy at all. It lacked 'the executive-expert character of bureaucratic power applying formal rationality to implement pre-set goals'.<sup>145</sup> Their conclusion, however, is in keeping with the civil war analyses of bureaucracy: it is the party which brings about an integrated power structure.<sup>146</sup> Hence the relationship between the party and the bureaucracy becomes the key one.

b. The Moscow soviet and the battle against bureaucracy

In the city the Moscow soviet was often accused of being over-bureaucratic and distant from the population.<sup>147</sup> The old

145. Ferenc Fehér, Agnes Heller, György Márkus, Dictatorship over Needs, Blackwell, Oxford 1983, p.107.

146. ibid., p.108.

147. Ransome in early 1919 reported that the public no longer flocked to the gallery during meetings of the soviet: the excitement of 1917 had ebbed, Ransome, Six Weeks, p.46.

city uprava (council) had employed about 40,000 people before October 1917. By May 1920 the same institution employed about 80,000 serving a smaller population.<sup>148</sup> From the end of 1918 steps were taken to conduct a survey of communists in Moscow's institutions<sup>149</sup> in order to understand the scale of the problem, and shortly afterwards Ol'minskii and Meshcheryakov called for a purge of soviet employees. They pointed out that in offices, as mentioned, recommendations for party membership often turned into a protection racket.<sup>150</sup> There was a justified fear that the bureaucracy was subverting the party. Following the VIII party congress the MK formed a special commission to combat bureaucracy in offices,<sup>151</sup> the forerunner of many such institutions.

The soviet was not only bureaucratic in terms of its inflated staff but also in the way that it worked. In Marxist theory the soviet represented the transcending of parliamentarianism by 'the conversion of representative institutions from talking shops into "working bodies"'.<sup>152</sup> In practice, as we have seen, power moved away from the plenum to ever smaller groups at the apex of the soviet's structure. Medvedev has commented on this in the following terms:

...The combination of legislative and executive powers within one institution leads over a period of time to the disproportionate growth of the executive, thus turning representative bodies into empty appendages, providing an opening for a regime of personal dictatorship, and creating a favourable atmosphere for the development of bureaucracy and abuse of power.<sup>153</sup>

148. KT, 5 May 1920.

149. Kommunar, 17 December 1918.

150. VIMS, 13 February 1919.

151. Dumova, p.108.

152. 'State and Revolution', Lenin PSS, vol.33, p.46.

153. Roy Medvedev, On Socialist Democracy, Spokesman Books, London 1975, pp.140-1.

While Medvedev was concerned with developments after Lenin's death, his analysis is apposite for the development of bureaucracy in the soviet during the civil war. The plenary session of 13 January 1919, for example, highlighted some of the problems. There were complaints from the floor that the soviet met very rarely in plenary session. The chairman of the session, Vladimirskii, stated that in offices in the centre and in the raions bureaucracy and chinovnichestvo were rampant. During sessions, he stated, deputies showed their lack of respect by leaving in the middle of proceedings, and many of those elected to responsible positions, including EC members, failed to attend at all. He called for more frequent reports to the plenum by officials, and on the basis of his proposals a resolution was passed making attendance at plenary sessions obligatory for all members of the EC and presidium.<sup>154</sup>

The party programme adopted by the VIII party congress tackled the problem of bureaucracy by insisting that all soviet members were to participate in some administrative work, and called for all offices to be rotated and for more people to be drawn into administration.<sup>155</sup> The congress resolution called for measures against the development of a bureaucratic caste and for increased 'links with the masses'.<sup>156</sup> The only specific response of the Moscow soviet was to hold new elections to the executive bodies on 27 May 1919 (see above). The EC was slightly increased in size from the 41 elected on 23 July 1918 to 44 members, but

154. Stenotchety MS, 1, 1919, p.14.

155. KPSS v rez. i resh., p.45.

156. VIII s"ezd RKP, pp.423-4; P, 6 May 1919.

more significantly over half of its composition was changed as 26 new members now joined. The presidium was doubled from the 5 elected on 16 October 1918 to 10 members.<sup>157</sup> Such measures were little more than palliatives and were more than balanced by the countervailing centralising tendency.

Following the congress the idea had been raised of dividing the plenum into sections, or standing committees, corresponding to the soviet's departments as a way of increasing the involvement of all deputies. With the breathing spell of early 1920 Tsivtsivadze, general manager of the soviet, once again raised the idea on the following grounds:

It is a secret to no-one that the plenum of the Moscow soviet is a purely formal organ, juridicial, ratifying or rejecting decisions of the ispolkom, occasionally listening to informational reports from one department or another.<sup>158</sup>

With over 1500 deputies the plenum could not discuss all questions in detail and had therefore become a purely voting body. Tsivtsivadze argued that the sections would act as link between the factories and the executive bodies. However, while his proposals allowed the sections to look into the work of the departments and to consider all proposals, they were not given the power to amend decisions or to interfere in the work of the departments. He was at pains to ensure that no hint of mass collegiality was permitted.<sup>159</sup> The plenary session of 23 March 1920 made membership of the sections obligatory. Their ability to criticise the departments was limited by making department or

157. KM, col.35.

158. KT, 20 March 1920.

159. KT, 20 March 1920.



collegia heads the leaders of the sections.<sup>160</sup>

The restrictions imposed on the sections meant that the hope that they would enliven the soviet was not fulfilled. At the meeting of the transport department section on 21 April 1920, among many examples, only 60 out of the 141 deputies attended.<sup>161</sup> By the end of 1920 only 12 out of the 19 departments and 5 commissions in the soviet had a section attached to it.<sup>160</sup> The gulf between the Moscow soviet and the working class was an important factor in the disturbances from the end of 1920. Against the background of a climate of reform at the end of 1920 Kamenev admitted, in a set of theses presented to the II Moscow guberniya conference of soviets (15-17 December 1920), that the soviets were moribund, bureaucratic, and that the plena were only involved in technical details while political discussion had died. General management was left to a small group of 15-20 people who, he argued, against their will become bureaucratic however much they inveighed against bureaucratism.<sup>163</sup>

Kamenev's theses proposed a range of radical reforms which went beyond the conventional denunciations of the evils of bureaucratism by the proponents of 'workers' democracy' (e.g., Zinoviev). The measures included extending the powers of the sections, rejuvenating plenary sessions. Establishing closer links between deputies and factories, and open sessions of the

160. KT, 24 March 1920; Stenotchety MS, 2, 1920, p.24.

161. KT, 22 April 1920.

162. KM, col.5.

163. Nove has recently argued the same point: 'One eliminates bureaucracy not by incantations, not by denunciations, but by eliminating the functions which bureaucracy performs, Nove, op.cit., p.90.

soviet. Above all, he insisted, the soviets should once again stand at the centre of political life by guaranteeing their rights and those of their executive bodies.<sup>164</sup> With the transition from military to economic tasks, the theses went on, the powers of the local soviets should be extended and they should act as the agents of the centre in the localities and not be by-passed by the commissariats, as had happened all too frequently during the war. Local soviets, through guberniya SNKh, should have greater economic powers. At the same time he called for an extension of VTsIK's powers and urged that no acts could be passed without its approval.<sup>165</sup> These proposals represented a major victory for the Democratic Centralists, who had been arguing for these things since late 1918, and indicated the extent of support that the reform movement could mobilise at this time.

The conference met in an optimistic mood.<sup>166</sup> Representatives of the oppositions such as Saprnov, Ignatov and Drozhzhin sat on the conference presidium together with mainstream representatives such as Kamenev, Lisitsyn, and Uryvaev. Once again Kamenev outlined the causes of bureaucracy in presenting his theses. In response to opposition concerns he argued that even if all the bourgeois specialists were sacked, bureaucracy would still not disappear. Instead of such a superficial view, he insisted, the real reasons for bureaucracy were to be sought in the poverty and backwardness of the country,

164. KT, 14 December 1920.

165. KT, 15 December 1920.

166. 496 voting delegates attended and 85 with consultative status. There were 488 communist delegates and 113 non-party, KT, 18 December 1920.

and the creation of an extremely complex system of state management without the basic elements available to support such a structure.<sup>167</sup> The time was ripe, he argued, for the working class itself to learn state management<sup>168</sup> and for the drift of power to the centre to be reversed.<sup>169</sup> Kamenev's speech included several of the points mentioned in contemporary analyses of bureaucracy. A reform resolution was passed on the basis of his theses, and even Trotsky no longer argued for more centralisation but restricted his comments to noting that the debate was between centralisers and decentralisers.<sup>170</sup>

In his speech to the VIII congress of soviets (22-29 December 1920) Kamenev's tone changed and he no longer spoke about reform and instead concentrated on the programme of economic reconstruction, the key theme of the congress. The measures adopted to revive the soviets were little more than cosmetic, including the recommendation that ECs were to meet as often as possible in factories.<sup>171</sup> The momentum for soviet reform was lost, and on 4 March 1921 an instruction on the working of the Moscow soviet was adopted which stressed only the need to make the soviet a more efficient instrument, and to this end an inner EC and an inner presidium were created. In July of that year the soviet's collegia were 'workerised' in which the percentage of workers 'from the bench' rose from 10-15 to 60.<sup>172</sup> Now formal workerisation was to substitute for genuine reform.

167. KT, 18 December 1920.                      168. KT, 19 December 1920.

169. KT, 21 December 1920.                      170. KT, 18 December 1920.

171. KT, 31 December 1920; Iz ist. grazh. voiny, p.639.

172. Aleshchenko (1976), pp.227, 231.

c. Moscow workers' inspection (Rabkrin)

To oppose the bureaucratisation and corruption of the state, party and Cheka control were supplemented with attempts at introducing mass popular control:

By extending direct control over almost every facet of Soviet society, the Bolsheviks vastly increased the government's administrative responsibilities while attempting to centralise the direction of this enormous empire in Moscow. By constructing a single party monolith, they eliminated, and thereby deprived themselves of the potential assistance of, all those nonbureaucratic elements of control found in pluralistic societies, such as an alert and watchful political opposition, an independent judiciary and press, and a climate of intellectual freedom in which ordinary citizens are not afraid to speak out. The whole intolerable burden of control thus came to rest squarely upon the party-state machinery.<sup>173</sup>

An office of State Control had existed under the autocracy, and was extended by the creation of a new Central Control Board in January 1918. In May of that year it was restructured and renamed the People's Commissariat of State Control (Goskontrol). The Moscow city department of state control was formed on 5 August 1918 by the presidium of the Moscow soviet. There was also a Moscow workers' inspection restricted to auditing enterprise management through the control commissions.

In Moscow the raion soviets were the basis of the inspection system, reflecting their traditionally close links with factory committees. Even before the reforms of April 1919 the raion soviet labour inspection departments conducted mass investigations of enterprises.<sup>174</sup> They were mainly concerned

173. Jan S. Adams, Citizen Inspectors in the Soviet-Union, Praeger, New York 1977, p.14.

174. E.g., a workers' inspection department was formed under Basmannyi raion soviet in November 1918. In an investigation of the supply apparatus it found widespread theft of bread and other

with checking the supply apparatus and to a lesser extent institutions and factories.<sup>175</sup> In this early phase inspections were usually initiated in factories by the factory committees and trade unions after an accident, an epidemic, or complaints about poor safety standards, and so on, and developed into general investigations into conditions in the enterprise. Zamoskvorech'e raion soviet, for instance, in the month to 17 December 1918 carried out 14 preliminary investigations and 4 more detailed ones, including an investigation into the Bromlei plant with its 1000 workers.<sup>176</sup>

The organisation of workers' inspection was a way of combatting the pervading bureaucratism of soviet institutions. However, this initial form of organisation was criticised in Moscow's evening paper on the grounds that there still remained a gulf between the soviet departments and workers' inspection. In January 1919 the paper called for inspection bodies to be elected directly by workers.<sup>177</sup> The Gorodskoi soviet plenum in April 1919 called for the reorganisation of Goskontrol' by basing it on elections from soviets and trade unions.<sup>178</sup> Other raions insisted that inspection should be based purely on the factories to prevent a breach between state inspection and workers' control.<sup>179</sup> Lenin criticised the Goskontrol' ministry at a

supplies. By May 1919 the Blagushe-Lefortovo inspection group, formed in January 1919, had conducted over 150 inspections, VIMS, 30 May 1919.

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175. VIMS, 1 July 1919.

176. VIMS, 17 December 1918.

177. VIMS, 11 January 1919.

178. VIMS, 4 April 1919.

179. VIMS, 5 April 1919.

special session of the Moscow soviet on 3 April 1919, and specifically noted the large number of chinovniki in it.<sup>180</sup> Plans for reform were drawn up and Stalin, the new commissar of Goskontrol', presented them in a decree of 6 April 1919 which envisaged, inter alia, a bureau of complaints and public participation.<sup>181</sup> The central Moscow workers' inspection was formed by reorganising the Moscow soviet's revisions and instructions department. In the raions the workers' inspection of the new type with broader representation was first organised in Blagushe-Lefortovo raion in May and lastly in Butyrskii raion in August 1919.<sup>182</sup> They were usually elected from the factory committees, the raion soviet economic departments, and the inspection collegia. There were no direct elections from the workplace.<sup>183</sup> The Moscow soviet presidium in a decree insisted that the inspection groups had the right to free access to all institutions and departments of the soviet.<sup>184</sup>

The formation of workers' inspection put the continued existence of control commissions in enterprises in further doubt. While most of the factory committee's functions, such as the hiring and firing of labour, had been transferred to management bodies their trade union functions allowed their continued existence. On the other hand, the control commissions duplicated much of the work of the state inspectorate, at least in theory, and were therefore gradually phased out.<sup>185</sup>

The first plenum of the Moscow workers' inspection met on 20

180. Lenin PSS, vol.38, p.256.

181. Adams, pp.24-5.

182. VIMS, 2 December 1919.

183. VIMS, 9 July 1919.

184. VIMS, 3 July 1919.

185. VIMS, 1 October 1919.

September 1919. Fedenev, its chairman, argued that the aim was to attract as broad a layer as possible of Moscow workers in the battle against 'inadequacies of the mechanism'.<sup>186</sup> At the VIII party conference in December 1919 he reported on the rapid growth of workers' inspection in Moscow. In the space of a few months they had grown massively, and inspection cells had been formed in 261 of Moscow's factories (about a third of the total active at the time) encompassing over 60,000 workers.<sup>187</sup> The expansion of the inspection movement, however, was not looked upon as an unmitigated blessing. Fedenev warned that the growth of such a mass movement involving so many non-party people could form the basis of an oppositional movement in future soviet elections.<sup>188</sup>

Popular inspection was reorganised by VTsIK on 7 February 1920, and the existing control organs were transformed into a single People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (Rabkrin - RKI). The base of the system was still the workers' inspection groups formed by the 9 April 1919 decree, but now they were to be integrated into the unified structure of the commissariat and elected by all those with soviet voting rights.<sup>189</sup> In a sense this can be seen as a response to Fedenev's warnings on the dangers of the development of a mass non-party workers' inspection movement.<sup>190</sup>

186. VIMS, 22 September 1919.

187. VIII konf. RKP, p.121; VIMS, 2 December 1919.

188. VIII konf. RKP, p.121.

189. P, 8 February 1920.

190. The 7 February 1920 decree allowed the TUs to remove candidates unacceptable to them from Rabkrin work, and TU participation was further strengthened by the III TU congress

On the basis of the decree the 9 March 1920 Moscow soviet EC meeting decided to unite the Moscow workers' inspection with the Moscow section of Goskontrol to form the Moscow RKI as a department of the Moscow soviet. Its brief was to investigate all organs of local administration and the economy.<sup>191</sup> It did not have the general right to inspect the Cheka.<sup>192</sup> Local RKIs were to be formed under the raion soviets with the rights of departments, but at the same time subordinate to the central collegia under the Moscow soviet.<sup>193</sup>

In its new guise workers' inspection very much enhanced the role of the delegated inspectors as the core of the RKI groups, and the cells were reduced to auxiliary status as assistance (sodeistvie) cells. Group investigations were still used to check on enterprises and other organisations,<sup>194</sup> but clearly the reform of February 1920 tended towards a centralisation away from mass working class participation. In March 1920 there were 207 RKI inspectors in Moscow, 73 of whom were specialists (accountants, representatives of the Vecheka and MChK), and the organisation was headed by Koletov in the Moscow soviet.<sup>195</sup> The majority of the inspectors were therefore workers, and RKI turned out to be an effective way of winking out yet more capable

(April 1920) decision to involve themselves actively in Rabkrin (Carr, 1, p.232). TU involvement was a way of ensuring a certain level of control over them to prevent any autonomist developments.

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191. KT, 24 March 1920.

192. Leggett, p.157.

193. KT, 24 March 1920.

194. KT, 18 March 1920.

195. KT, 20 March 1920.



people from the factories. These were then poached by the MSNKh and the MPO leading to a weakening of the RKI.<sup>196</sup> Once again, the battle against bureaucracy took second place to staffing that very bureaucracy. At the same time Fedenev's warnings about the danger of such a mass movement was heeded. An MK resolution of 3 May 1920, passed with RK secretaries, stated in no uncertain terms that:

...The RKI can become one of the most powerful weapons of the working class in its struggle against bureaucracy only if all of its work is conducted in close contact with the general tasks of the party, which is the highest body expressing the interests of the working class at every single individual moment.<sup>197</sup>

Elections were held to the Moscow RKI in the raions in October 1920. The period of delegation to the RKI was set at only a few months in order to maximise the numbers participating and to ensure that members were not torn away from production.<sup>198</sup> By December 1920 there were 673 RKI cells in the city, and over 20,000 were involved in the assistance cells.<sup>199</sup> By January 1921 the number of elected representatives to the Moscow RKI exceeded 800.<sup>200</sup>

In his address to the I all-Russian RKI conference on 15 October 1920 Stalin, typically, posed the rhetorical question of why the RKI was required when the state belonged to the workers and peasants. He gave three reasons: the inexperience of the working class in running the state inevitably led to some mistakes; some bureaucratic chinovniki remained in their posts;

196. KT, 18 March 1920.

197. KT, 5 May 1920.

198. KT, 12 October 1920.

199. KT, 8 December 1920.

200. KT, 26 January 1921.

and the conditions of a ruined economy.<sup>201</sup> He failed to mention the reason given so often in Moscow; that the RKI was a way of involving the working class in running the state apparatus. This omission reflected the new style of the RKI as a bureaucratic apparatus in its own right and contributed to its declining effectiveness so bitterly condemned by Lenin in his last article 'Better Fewer, But Better'.

During the civil war the soviets as mass participatory organisations etiolated, and party control was asserted both for ideological reasons and as a way of keeping a check on the development of bureaucratism. Lenin's thoughts in this period oscillated, on the one hand, between organisation as the panacea to bureaucratism and the solution to the task of building socialism, and, on the other hand, the alternative of mass involvement. At the Zamoskvorech'e party general meeting on 29 November 1920 Lenin argued that the RKI had done little to prove itself as a school for the management of the state. Instead, 'The bureaucratism of the soviet apparatus could not but permeate the party apparatus, since these apparatuses are intimately bound together'.<sup>202</sup> As Lenin recognised, the creation of a party-state apparatus increasingly rendered both impervious to popular control, and even the party's control over the state bureaucracy was not assured.

201. KT, 17 October 1920.

202. Lenin PSS, vol.42, p.49. On mass involvement, e.g., on 28 June 1918 Lenin argued that the revolution required a 'sufficiently strong organisation' (Lenin PSS, vol.36, pp.470-1). He also insisted that 'socialism can only be built when 10 or a 100 times more of the masses than earlier begin themselves to build the state and the new economic life', Lenin PSS, vol.37, pp.425-6.

P A R T   I I I

The Crisis of War Communism

In 1920 and early 1921 two major debates racked the Moscow party organisation and the party as a whole. The first, which can be called the party debate, centred on the structure of the relationships between various levels of the organisation and the role of the individual party member. The second, known as the trade union debate, focused on the party's relationship with the trade unions and by extension on the nature of the links between the soviet state and the working class. Neither question was original and both had been discussed for many years prior to 1920-1, but it was precisely as a result of the debates in this period that certain answers were formulated and given organisational expression which, despite renewed discussion in the 1920s and later, survive to the present day as the basis of Soviet-type systems.

The dual nature of the crisis in 1920 was characterised by a historian of the twenties as

Not only one of the breach (otryv) of the party nizy from the party verkhi, but it was also one of the isolation of the party from the working class, of the isolation of the working class from the peasantry.<sup>1</sup>

As Shlyapnikov put it at the X party congress, not only was the party split, but the party itself represented a verkh in regard to the non-party nizy.<sup>2</sup> The problem of the nizy had

1. N.N. Popov, Ocherk istorii rossiiskoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bol'shevikov), M/L. 1926, p.248. The breach between the Soviet state and the peasantry was an essential part of the background to the debates but will not be discussed directly.

2. X s"ezd RKP, pp.71-2.

surfaced at several points during the civil war, as mentioned, and the Workers' Opposition can be seen as the legatee of the nizy movement and the closest it came to organised expression. The Workers' Opposition can be seen as an expression of the anti-authoritarian radicalism of October 1917, and its defeat marked the victory and consolidation of the emergent party-state bureaucracy.

The party debate centred on a cluster of issues around the split between a passive membership and the party and state activists: the problem of privileges and inequality in the party, the role of the cells, the rights of party members and general party democracy, and the effectiveness of party committees. The trade union debate, as the MK put it in its TU resolution of 18 January 1921, involved 'the relationship between the leading elements of the proletariat organised in the RKP and all the rest of the broad mass of the proletariat.'<sup>3</sup> The fundamental question was whether the party should play an absolute tutelary role in society or whether its guiding role, which no communist denied, could be carried out in tandem with the working class organised in trade unions.

Both debates were attempts to find a way out of the economic, social and political crises engendered by the policies of war communism and both offered alternatives to the war communist system. Discussion was restricted to party members, but the non-party masses increasingly made their presence felt on the streets of Moscow, the villages of Tambov, and the battlements of Kronstadt. The two debates - democracy within the

3. P, 19 January 1921.

party and the party's relations with mass social organisations - allowed of separate solution but by the end of 1920 the issues of the party debate had become lost in those of the trade unions. The attempts to reform the party became lost in the TU debate and only re-emerged on the eve of the X party congress, by which time the very bitterness of the debates themselves and events such as the Kronstadt rising militated against a reform solution to the party's problems. This Part will look at the issues in the debates in Moscow, their course, the extent of support for reform, and finally look at some of the reasons for their failure.

## CHAPTER 9

### The Rise of the Reform Movements

The background to the debates in the city was the problem of militarisation in both the wide and narrow senses. Militarisation signified the extension of state administrative methods over all other bodies, and authoritarian patterns of organisation with them. By 1920 militarisation was well advanced in the economy and the labour process, and in that year the party itself was threatened by the direct assertion of state military methods.

#### 1. Militarisation

##### a. The economic crisis and the trade unions

In December 1919 Trotsky proposed a series of measures, hinted at already at the 24 September Moscow city party conference, aimed at the militarisation of labour.<sup>4</sup> The distinction between the military and civilian spheres was to be obliterated through universal labour duty and the militia system, and the comparatively efficient machinery of the Red Army was to be harnessed for economic purposes (Chapter 6). We have already discussed the work of the Moscow commission on labour duty. Labour was to come under military discipline enforced by an array of punitive organs to punish 'labour desertion' and other offences. It was Trotsky who forged the link between the general economic crisis and the role of the trade unions, as the organisers of labour. As he informed the MK on 6 January 1920,

4. P, 17 December 1919.

with Russia cut off from foreign aid and with a stock of worn-out machines, labour would have to be substituted for capital.<sup>5</sup> As Day writes:

The civil war brought with it a steadily widening gap between traditional socialist ideals and economic necessity. Within little more than two years a pattern of organisation emerged which in many ways provided a prototype for Stalin's five-year plans of the 1930s. Ironically the main architect of this system was Trotsky.<sup>6</sup>

Trotsky provided not only the organisational model for Stalin but also the theory. A 'production ideology' developed in which the various humanistic aims of Marxism were replaced by the idea of production as the goal of the revolution and not the means to achieve socialism. With Lenin's support Trotsky's proposals, with modifications giving slightly more scope to the trade unions, were adopted by the TsK on 22 January 1920.<sup>7</sup>

General discussion over the respective roles of the trade unions, soviets, and the party in the soviet state developed in the period leading up to the IX party congress. In autumn 1919 Shlyapnikov formulated a division of tasks between the party, to be concerned with political management, the soviets, to be the unique form of political power, and the trade unions, to whom economic power was to be transferred.<sup>8</sup> In March 1920 he developed these ideas to include greater autonomy for the

5. Richard B. Day, Leon Trotsky and the Politics of Economic Isolation, CUP 1973, p.25.

6. ibid., p.17.

7. p., 5 February 1920.

8. M.S. Zorkii (ed), Rabochaya oppositsiya: materialy i dokumenty, M. 1926, p.16.

communist fractions in the TUs<sup>9</sup> and thus reopened the VIII party congress controversy over the issue. The focus of the controversy was now established: was the working class to be treated in the same way as the peasantry and what was to be the role of the TUs, as a working class organisation, in this militarised system?

At the 17-18 March 1920 city party conference Bukharin defended the MK's theses on 'The party, soviets, and trade unions' which proposed what was becoming the orthodox interpretation of the role of the TUs as educators and organisers of the proletariat but not the direct managers of the economy.<sup>10</sup> This view came to lie at the centre of the Platform of the Ten's position. While rejecting Shlyapnikov's syndicalism and trade union encroachment on the rights of the soviets and the party by arguing for the subordination of communist TU fractions and TUs themselves to the party, the MK theses were influenced by Tomskii's theses,<sup>11</sup> defended by him at the conference, that one-man management in industry should be introduced only with great reservations and collegiality preferred where possible. An indication of the growing opposition to militarisation in the MPO was revealed by the heated discussion at the conference and by the slim majority of ten by which the MK theses were adopted.<sup>12</sup>

9. P, 12 March 1920.

10. This view was proposed by Zinoviev in Izvestiya TsK-RKP, 13, 2 March 1920, and in the TsK theses towards the IX party congress, Izvestiya TsK RKP, 17, 30 March 1920; IX s"ezd RKP, pp.558-561.

11. Ekonomicheskaya zhizn', 54, 1920.

12. KT, 20, 21 March 1920.



A second city party conference on 25 March 1920 turned its attention to general economic policy. Trotsky once again put forward the rationale behind his plans:

Under the conditions of the capitalist epoch only free labour could be the most productive... but under socialist society the widespread application of social-compulsory labour can give extremely good results, since this forced labour has nothing in common with forced labour in bourgeois economies.

The application of this new sort of labour was being delayed, he argued, by the spiritual (dukhovnyi) backwardness of the population. He called for management of the economy to be in the hands of economic organs, while the TUs should be restricted to organising labour: 'We must put an end to the interference of the trade unions in the economy'. To militarise industry and raise the productivity of labour emergency bodies such as Glavpolitput were to be formed. His plans combined the idealism of the subbotnik movement with the ruthlessness of the army high command. The conference unanimously supported the TSK line, but revealed its uneasiness by once again expressing reservations over one-man management.<sup>13</sup>

Opposition to the extension of military methods to the economy was expressed by Osinskii at the end of 1919.<sup>14</sup> By the IX party congress, with the threat of militarisation being extended not only to the economy but to soviet and party life, his warnings against extending military culture to other spheres became sharper, and above all warned against the indiscriminate application of one-man management to civil and party

13. KT, 26 March 1920; P, 26 March 1920.

14. P, 30 December 1919.

apparatuses.<sup>15</sup> Lenin, however, supported Trotsky's plans on the grounds that compulsion was the only source of unity and discipline left with the disappearance of capital, and the army was the source of this discipline.<sup>16</sup> The congress adopted the militarisation programme which was to be coordinated by a Council of Labour and Defence (STO). A few days later the III trade union congress supported labour duty and the IX congress decisions, and thereby rejected the use of the TUs to perform direct economic functions.<sup>17</sup> The way was now clear for the application of militarisation.

b. Militarisation and the MPO: the railway RPO

The conflicts between the military departments and the MPO have been mentioned, and with Trotsky's militarisation plans for the economy and labour they were now extended to the civilian sphere. At the 25 March 1920 city party conference Trotsky had stated:

We must militarise the party in the same way that we have militarised the economy. We require an internal psychological revolution and the heroic application of effort... not being afraid of extraordinary actions and exceptional measures.<sup>18</sup>

15. IX s"ezd RKP, pp.105-6, 155-7.

16. ibid., pp.15, 21-2.

17. KT, 14 April 1920.

18. KT, 26 March 1920. At the conference he argued that the centralism of glavki and economic organisations should be reproduced in the localities by oblast economic organs, and that this centralism should be reflected in the party by TsK oblast party organisations. In this spirit at the IX party congress he turned Preobrazhenskii's proposal for a more decentralised party, by forming party oblast bureaux, on its head: instead of oblast bureaux elected from local committees, which he argued would be prey to the old sin of oblastnichestvo, he called for them to be constituted as direct TsK committees by appointment.

At the IX party congress the applicability of militarisation to the party was a source of contention. We have noted Osinskii's reservations, and he was joined by Sapronov who argued that the existence of the political departments signified nothing else but the militarisation of party life.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, Vladimirskii called for the militarisation of the party,<sup>20</sup> whereas Kamenev diplomatically argued that while militarisation was to be supported in general, it was not to be applied to the party.

It was over the prerogatives of railway party organisations that the issue of party militarisation came to a head in Moscow. In his capacity as Commissar of Transport Trotsky was able to implement his plans first through Glavpolitput', then from August 1920 Tsektran (TsK of rail and water TU), which undermined not only the independence of transport trade unions but also the party organisations in transport.

There had been a long history of conflict between Glavpolitput' (a central political department under the Commissariat of Transport - NKPS), formed in mid-January 1919 as part of the militarisation of the railways, and the Moscow railway (Zheleznodorozhnyi) party organisation.<sup>22</sup> It had interfered in the work of the RK and its cells on the railways, organised parallel clubs, libraries, and so on, and had convened party

19. IX s"ezd RKP, pp.122, 155.

20. ibid., p.322.

21. ibid., p.356.

22. The headquarters of Moscow's railway RPO was in Sokol'nicheskii raion where 4 out of the 8 lines had their offices. The special raion had been formed at the first meeting of the MK after the February revolution with its authority formally limited to the bounds of the city's circular (okruzhnoi) railway, but in practice its influence stretched far up the lines, V. Boborynin et al (eds), Sokol'niki, M. 1967, p.44.

meetings without consulting either the cells or the RK. Above all, it had been accused of 'overbearing behaviour'.<sup>23</sup> Resentment at the militarisation of party life on the railways through Glavpolitput' surfaced at a delegate meeting of 23 communists on 21-23 May 1919, organised by the political department of the Moscow-Kazan line. While agreeing that extraordinary measures were necessary, they insisted that the departments were to work in close contact with party and trade union organisations.<sup>24</sup> The meeting of the railway raion RK in June 1919 rejected by 10-2 the proposal, argued by Zimin, Vompe and others, that the parallelism between the political department and the RPO could be eliminated by merging the railway RPO with the city organisation. Instead, the majority led by Pyatnitskii, Amosov and others insisted that the political departments required political guidance from the party which could be best affected by a special railway RPO.<sup>25</sup>

With the reorganisation in February 1920 of Glavpolitput', now headed by Rozengol'ts, whereby its party functions were extended,<sup>26</sup> the continued existence of the railway raion was once

23. Zheleznodorozhniki i revolyutsiya, M. 1923, p.48.

24. P, 31 May 1919.

25. P, 15 June 1919. The VIII party congress had called for the abolition of extra-territorial party organisations such as the railway, military, post and telegraph, and print raions on the grounds that they infringed the principles of democratic centralism (VIII s"ezd RKP, p.425). In his report Zinoviev singled out the railway raions of Moscow and Petrograd as superfluous (ibid., p.162), though no time limit was set on their abolition. The TSK itself shelved proposals for their abolition in June 1919 on the grounds that there were special problems on the railways, Izvestiya TSK RKP, 2, 7 June 1919, p.4.

26. Izvestiya TSK RKP, 13, 2 March 1920.

again put in doubt. Glavpolitput' pushed strongly for the abolition of railway party raions throughout the network, including Moscow.<sup>27</sup> While the TSK's own position was ambiguous,<sup>28</sup> the MK several times rejected abolition. At the meeting on 29 March 1920, however, despite Pyatnitskii's rearguard action which argued that the political departments were in no position to undertake the work of party organisations, a commission was appointed to report on the question.<sup>29</sup>

On the eve of the IX party congress the MK now gave the railway RK its full backing against the extension of politotdel'chestva on the railways and to other industries. Together with the railway trade union TSK they protested against the Glavpolitput' proposals to give administrative personnel the right to fine and in general to punish workers and employees. The MK now called for political departments to be deprived of all political functions.<sup>30</sup> At the congress itself Myasnikov questioned the dual role of Glavpolitput' as a state and party organisation. On the key issue of appointments and distribution of party members he called for consultation between political departments and local party organisations,<sup>31</sup> while Kamenev went further and argued that primacy in this field should lie with the LPO, though in consultation with the political departments.<sup>32</sup>

27. KT, 18 March 1920.

28. KT, 4 April 1920.

29. KT, 4 April 1920. Its members were Pyatnitskii, Myasnikov, and Bubnov. Earlier MK decisions to retain the railway raion were supported by general meetings in other raions, VIMS, 18 February 1920.

30. Zhel. i rev., p.48.

31. IX s"ezd RKP, pp.207-8.

32. ibid., p.311.

The IX party congress decided that the political departments were to have the dominant say in party work in transport on the grounds that the TUs were too weak on the railways to transmit party influence.<sup>33</sup> In the light of this the railway organisation was dissolved in May 1920 and Glavpolitput' became the unique organiser of party cells on the railways. The victory of the militarisers left a legacy of bitterness in the city organisation and led to many disputes between communists on the railways and the new political department leaders.<sup>34</sup> The attempts to apply militarisation to the party were not so much a function of the war as part of the strategy to deal with the country's economic problems. It was against this background that the debate over party democracy developed in the city.

## 2. The party debate

### a. The terms of debate

The party debate can be schematically presented as a conflict between the party and state party workers (APWs and SPWs), on the one hand, and the rank and file party members (RFPM), on the other. With the changes in the composition of the party during the war and the party weeks, mentioned above, the RFPMs tended to have more in common with the ordinary non-party worker than with the verkhi, as the TsK admitted in the report on its work on the eve of the X party congress.<sup>35</sup> At the same time the TsK argued that the 'ideological temper' of the party had changed because of a large intake of ex-members of other parties,

33. KPSS v rez. i resh., p.178.

34. Zhel. i rev., p.49.

35. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 29, 7 March 1920, p.5.

and thereby was able to devalue the specific arguments put forward by the oppositions. While agreeing that a breach had developed between leading party centres, especially those in soviet work, and the working class, which manifested itself in privileges and inequality,<sup>36</sup> the TsK ingenuously argued that a reduction in this bureaucratism was a solution to the debate. In fact the issues ran far deeper than the TsK chose to assume.

In the spring and summer of 1920 in Moscow the conflict over the organisation of the Moscow party led to a series of tortuous organisational contests for dominance over the various party committees in the city (and guberniya). The first incident in this growing crystallisation of positions took place in Gorodskoi raion. We have seen that throughout 1919 and above all at the January 1920 conference of active party workers the existing committees had been criticised for their ineffectiveness and were held responsible for the gulf between the verkhi and nizy. The Gorodskoi RK itself had long been criticised for not devoting enough attention to work in the raion.<sup>37</sup> At a delegate meeting on 27 April 1920 the critics of the old RK, including Ignatov, Medvedev and Berezin, surged to power and took four out of the five places on the RK bureau.<sup>38</sup> They now launched into a flurry of organisational work which they claimed would overcome the defects of the old committee. The RK apparatus was restructured, the raion divided into seven uchastki, each headed by an organiser appointed by the RK, thirty organisers were sent to weaker cells, and so on.<sup>39</sup>

36. loc.cit.

37. KT, 3 April 1920.

38. KT, 5 May 1920.

39. KT, 3 July 1920.

The new Gorodskoi RK was trying to break down the divisions within the party by improving educational work and by involving cell members in party work, and at the same time it was attempting to improve the party's standing with the non-party workers. However, the resistance to measures aimed at involving a larger segment of party members was revealed by the following incident. At a meeting of RK secretaries called by the MK on 3 May 1920, Zaslavskii proposed that the role of delegate meetings should be enhanced by inviting two or three cell members to them, including the youngest and most backward individuals, to encourage them to play a more active role. His proposal aroused a storm of protest on the part of the RK secretaries who argued that the measure would destroy the delovoi (businesslike) atmosphere of the delegate meetings.<sup>40</sup>

A specific apparat ideology of brisk executive action had developed in the party at the expense of debate and participation. Nevertheless, opposition was growing based on the division between an active and passive membership. It was now becoming unusual for the verkh/nizy controversy not to be raised at party meetings. Kotov, for example, commented that the 30 August 1920 Sokol'nicheskii raion delegate meeting had not been dominated by the 'usual demagoguery' on the split. Instead, it had been a delovoi meeting at which a new RK had been elected and 'an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust had been established between the RK and the cells'.<sup>41</sup>

While the tensions in the MPO accumulated the party organisation was distracted by the chimera of the Polish war. At

40. KT, 5 May 1920.

41. KT, 3 September 1920.



the emergency (III) Moscow guberniya party conference (21-22 August 1920) the 259 delegates were inspired by Bukharin's and Sorin's reports on the prospects for international revolution opened up by the advance on Warsaw. The resolution called for Moscow to make yet more sacrifices to ensure success at the front.<sup>42</sup> The Polish war, and Soviet victories in the civil war, therefore, encouraged the continuation of wartime policies at a time when pressure for change was reaching a dangerous level. At the conference itself Zelenskii's report on the work of the MK was followed by speeches once again criticising the shortcomings of the MK. No decisions were taken, though a commission was entrusted with drafting a resolution incorporating the proposals for reforming the MK.<sup>43</sup> The work of the commission was pre-empted, however, by the crisis in the MPO.

b. The Baumanskii incident

The signal for a major revolt against the party process as it had developed during the civil war, against militarised forms of party organisation and work, was given in the heavily proletarian Baumanskii party organisation. In spring 1920 the Baumanskii revisional commission, the majority of whose members were later to join the Workers' Opposition, prepared a report on the work of the RK for 1919 and early 1920. It accused the RK of exceeding its authority, deciding questions that should have been settled by the organisation as a whole, of not handing over questions to be discussed by the cells, all of which had led to

42. KT, 22 August 1920.

43. KT, 24 August 1920.

the 'death of living thought'.<sup>44</sup> At the IX congress Kiselev, a key figure in the Workers' Opposition, had already complained that the party centre had a tendency to suffocate thought in the localities.<sup>45</sup> The report continued that those bold enough to have their own opinions, including senior and long-time party members, had been removed from party work, and that the cells (whose diminished role has been discussed above) had been suborned by pressure from the apparatus.<sup>46</sup> These were to become standard opposition complaints.

The criticisms of the RK ended with a call for 'the necessary conclusions to be drawn'. The report prompted an unsuccessful 'coup' against the old RK at a meeting on 28 August 1920. The participants of the meeting, who included Demidov, G. Kuranova, Kryukov, and N. Tulyakov, drew up a list of new members for the RK and elected a troika for the further coordination of actions and to find accommodation for further meetings. The meeting expressed a lack of confidence in some leading party workers, called for the replacement of the verkhi, and discussed the organisation of an opposition presence at the forthcoming national party conference and congress.<sup>47</sup>

A special commission was appointed, first by the MK bureau, and then by the full MK, to look into the state of affairs in the Baumanskii party organisation. Its conclusions, presented to the

44. Manievich, p.174.

45. IX s"ezd RKP, p.60

46. Manievich, p.174.

47. V.F. Kochegarov, 'K voprosu o bor'be Moskovskoi organizatsii RKP(b) s antipartiinymi gruppirovkami nakanune diskussii o profsoyuzakh', Uch. zap. Mos. Gos. Zaochnyi Ped. In-t., issue 27, 1969, p.152.

MK plenum on 20 September 1920, stated that the 28 August meeting had been conspiratorial by dint of the creation of a 'leading organ' in the form of the troika to form a 'separate organisation'. The commission warned all the participants of the meeting that a repetition of the incident might mean expulsion from the party, and meanwhile severely reprimanded them, transferred some to other raions, and suspended the initiators of the meeting from the party for six months.<sup>48</sup>

The MK itself, however, was split on its attitude to the oppositionists. Some felt that the criticisms of party work had been justified, and at an MK meeting on the eve of the IX conference some of the opposition were allowed to defend themselves. Their claim that the 28 August meeting had only tried to 'identify the party's ailments', and had been an attempt to improve work in the cells and 'to refresh party work', satisfied the majority of the MK. The plenum now limited itself to issuing a 'severe censure' to the meeting's organisers and forbade them to hold a responsible post for three months.<sup>49</sup>

Peace, however, did not break out in the Baumanskii organisation. The opposition now called for the full rehabilitation of those punished. At the same time they continued their criticisms of the RK, which was accused of stifling criticism and of being isolated from the workers, and they insisted on new elections to the committee.<sup>50</sup> The opposition's efforts were crowned with success when at the 11 October 1920 raion delegate meeting they obtained a majority on

48. ibid., p.152.

49. ibid., p.153.

50. ibid., p.155.

the RK, and on 12 October at the first session of the new soviet plenum obtained a majority on the ispolkom.<sup>51</sup> In this way the opposition had gained control of the party and soviet apparatus in one of Moscow's largest raions.

On the eve of the IX party conference the demands for change on the part of the Workers' Opposition intensified in other raions. Under pressure from the opposition the Khamovnicheskii raion delegate meeting on 14 September 1920, for example, elected a new RK which was enlarged to include representatives of the cells in the largest factories in the raion.<sup>52</sup> The RFPs were asserting themselves in the MPO.

c. The MK and the IX party conference

In a circular letter to party committees of 4 September 1920 the TsK suggested that the gulf between the verkhi and nizy, between the rank and file communists and certain party and soviet leaders, had arisen because of 'incorrect relations' between them, the abuse of power and the development of privileges. To investigate the complaints of communists gubkomy were to form commissions.<sup>53</sup> On the eve of the party conference a commission consisting of some TsK members, representatives of the Moscow and Petrograd organisations, and Ignatov and Sapronov as opposition representatives, looked into the problem of the verkhi. It recommended not only control commissions in the centre and the localities, but also insisted that all party members were to be

51. Manievich, p.174.

52. KT, 19 September 1920.

53. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 21, 1920, p.2

involved in party work by being assigned to a cell.<sup>54</sup>

In its report for September 1920 the MK acknowledged the depth of feeling over the split between the verkhi and nizy in the Moscow organisation.<sup>55</sup> At the same time the MK issued two important documents summarising its position on the questions being debated at the time, and provided an analysis of the whole course of party developments during the civil war.

The first document was issued in preparation for a 'week of strengthening the party', which was held in response to the TsK letter of 16 September 1920 and involved the organisation of 800 party meetings in an intensive campaign. A key aspect of the week was to ensure that all party members, irrespective of their posts, were attached to a cell, and thus served as an attempt to overcome the divisions in the party. In its theses on the week the MK argued that the division between the party, on the one hand, and other class organisations such as the trade unions, on the other, was inevitable up to the time that the proletariat established its hegemony. Therefore, the party, uniting only a minority of the proletariat, was the guarantor of the success of the revolution, and this required iron discipline and trust in the party centre. In this way the justification for party dominance was outlined. The theses identified the cells as the key link in the party and included detailed instructions on their organisation.<sup>56</sup> The emphasis on the cells had been developing gradually during the war, as opposed to regarding delegate

54. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 29, 7 March 1921, p.6.

55. Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., M. 1920, p.4.

56. KT, 19 September 1920; Otchet, pp.3, 56.

meetings or the raions as the centre of party life, but as we have seen they were no longer seen in terms of actively running enterprises or institutions but as the organisers of party members themselves.

On 17 September 1920 the MK published its theses on 'the current tasks of the party' as part of the continuing response to the verkhi/nizy question. They argued that the 'centralised military-proletarian forms of dictatorship' both of the state and the party were forced by the civil war and intervention and could only be relaxed with the final victory of the international proletariat. The application of these forms in a backward country, they went on, led to a constant danger of the formation of a bureaucratic layer isolated from the masses, and above all the separation of responsible communists from party duties and the development of a bureaucratic approach. The theses recognised that party meetings often became formal occasions and that the intellectual life of party organisations was often moribund. Once again they stressed that privileges should be eliminated, intra-party work revived, and that the fulfilment of party duties by all party members, above all in the ChON and the subbotniks, was compulsory.<sup>57</sup> The problems were recognised, but by holding the war responsible for the development of the bureaucracy the MK failed to admit the deeper causes of the crisis.

Many of the MK's points were reiterated by Myasnikov, the secretary of the MK, in a series of articles on the eve of the conference. He rejected the Workers' Opposition identification of the verkhi with the intelligentsia, and the nizy with the

57. KT, 17 September 1920.

58. KT, 19 September 1920.

proletariat on the justified grounds that many of the former, especially in the raions, were proletarian themselves, and were as much as any isolated from the workers.<sup>58</sup> He conceded that the mass of workers had lost their enthusiasm and were deeply critical of the privileges of the verkhi. The non-party conferences, he admitted, had turned into banal meetings to which the masses were indifferent.<sup>59</sup> He called for more open meetings of soviet bodies in factories, with more reports and discussions.<sup>60</sup>

The majority of the concrete recommendations of these documents were implemented by the IX party conference (22-25 September 1920). The conference marked the high point of the reform movement in the Russian Communist Party and was therefore in marked contrast to the X party congress held in March of the following year. The improved military situation by the end of 1920 and the pressure for reform in party organisations such as Moscow's encouraged hopes that some of the rigours of the war period could be relaxed within the party. Zinoviev was the main rapporteur on party questions at the conference and he admitted that 'proletarian centralism' had been replaced by 'glavkocentrism'; that military departments and military work dominated local party organisations; and that privileges had developed through bureaucracy, the principle of udarnost', the use of specialists, and had resulted in a split between the verkhi and nizy. His calls for wide discussion in the party, the decreased use of appointments in favour of elections, the reduction of inequalities in the party, the use of

59. KT, 21 September 1920.

60. KT, 23 September 1920.

reregistrations to monitor the social composition of the party, and so on, were tempered by the admission that the full implementation of these reforms had to wait for more propitious circumstances. His conclusion therefore stressed the need for iron discipline in the party.<sup>61</sup> The resolution on party construction recommended a range of democratising measures, including frequent report-backs by responsible party leaders, more elections of posts, and free criticism by party members.<sup>62</sup>

Reform within the party, however, both at the conference and in the MK's theses was considered in isolation from economic reform. Within the context of war communism the arguments centred on improvements in the working of the party organisations and failed to come to grips with the structural crisis of the economy and therefore with the sources of the split in the party.

The recommendations for control commissions in the centre and localities was adopted by the conference. Their aim was to overcome fractionalism in the party by clearing it of 'petty-bourgeois elements'.<sup>63</sup> A special MK commission had been established prior to the conference following the TsK circular letter entrusted with the task of investigating the way of life of responsible soviet and party workers with the aim of eliminating komissarstvo and bureaucratism,<sup>64</sup> but the commissions' functions were now changed by allowing them not only to investigate misdemeanours on the part of communists but also to

61. IX konf. RKP, pp.139-55.

62. ibid., pp.278-82.

63. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 25, 1920, p.2.

64. Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.4.



combat the so-called unhealthy tendencies in party organisations.<sup>65</sup> In this way the oppositions themselves became the object of scrutiny. These commissions were elected in the raions in October and November 1920, often at the same meetings which elected delegates to the November guberniya party conference, and at the conference the Moscow guberniya control commission (MKK) was elected. The control commissions were the equivalent to the workers' inspection movement but failed to develop a mass base. Instead, they tended to fuse with the party hierarchy and were thus rendered ineffective.<sup>66</sup>

An extended session of the MK meeting with party activists on 26 October 1920 adopted a wide-ranging instruction on democratising party life in the light of the IX conference. The aim was to 'attract the masses into active participation in the most important questions of party and soviet life'. To this end all meetings from the MK down were to be open to the next tier of the party hierarchy, reports were to be heard from all party, economic, and soviet centres, and at these extended sessions co-rapporteurs were to be allowed. Full discussion was to be permitted on all the most important questions until decisions at a higher level had been taken, though criticism was to be 'healthy' and not 'demagogic'. Material inequalities were to be abolished by introducing a uniform wage and standard rations for all responsible party workers.<sup>67</sup> This instruction acted as a charter for the debate that now unfolded over party democracy, and allowed extended discussion in the trade union debate.

65. Izvestiya TsK RKP, 26, 1920, p.17.

66. Adams, p.27.

67. Otchet MK za oktyabr' 1920g., pp.64-6.

d. Towards the guberniya party conference (20-22 November 1920)

The period between the IX party conference and the November guberniya party conference was marked by the full emergence of the oppositions into, as Myasnikov put it, 'a significant and "threatening" force'.<sup>68</sup> From early November the trade union issue ripened into a vigorous controversy. It was at this time that a group of party workers based in Gorodskoi raion emerged with their own critique of the party and the inadequacies of the MK. The leading figure of this 'group of active workers of the raions of Moscow' was E.N. Ignatov, who had long been a critic of various aspects of party life, notably in the period preceding the VIII party congress. The group now split away from the Democratic Centralists and in their emphasis on the need to revive inner-party democracy in the raions they gradually came to share the views of the Workers' Opposition. They proposed a radical critique of the 'lifeless' forms that party work took in Moscow. Up to February 1921 they supported Lenin's trade union platform, as the lesser evil compared to Trotsky's militarisation plans, and caused a mild shock when they switched their support to the Workers' Opposition.

Gorodskoi raion, as mentioned, had become the main base of the Ignatovtsy and it had been here that Ignatov had long played a leading role in the raion soviet. Here they had attempted to put their ideas into practice from April 1920, and after the IX conference went even further. A delegate meeting on 9 November 1920 adopted Burovtsev's proposal to use re-elections to the RK

68. Myasnikov, p.284.

as a way of extending party democracy. Time was to be allowed for the cells to draw up their own lists for the RK, and the election was to act as a mandate and vote of confidence in the Ignatov group's management of the raion. Similar provisions for cell participation were made for the elections to the forthcoming guberniya conference.<sup>69</sup>

The MK came under increasing criticism after the IX conference from the Workers' Opposition and the Ignatovtsy. The Baumanskii group argued that in the six months since its election the MK had lacked a 'single, firm, general organisational line'. They claimed to represent 'the most conscious and active segment' of the Moscow working class amongst whom, they claimed, there was growing 'a healthy discontent with the policies of the MK'. On 16 October 1920 the Baumanskii RK demanded an emergency guberniya conference at which the MK could be reelected. A section of the Gorodskoi RK put forward a similar demand, while others considered that this constituted a vote of no confidence in the MK, which was due for reelection soon anyway. General agreement was reached when the demand was rephrased: 'in view of the end of the reregistration and the necessity to renew the party organisation from top to bottom it is necessary to reelect the MK'.<sup>70</sup>

At stake was control over the largest party organisation in the country, which now seemed to be within the grasp of a coalition of oppositions. In the MK itself they gained increasing support. In mid-October 1920 a group on the committee sympathetic to the Workers' Opposition called for a review of the

69. KT, 12 November 1920.

70. Kochegarov (1969), p.155.

punishment of the leaders of the Workers' Opposition in Baumanskii raion, considering that 'it had not been necessary to transfer anyone... from the raion' and that 'the MK made a mistake in its initial approach to the raion'.<sup>71</sup> Under pressure the MK acceded to opposition demands for an emergency guberniya conference, to be convened on 20 November. There was to be a city-wide discussion on the activities of the MK in preparation for the conference. MK members were given the right to defend their own positions.<sup>72</sup> The 26 October instruction, discussed above, allowed any communist, and not only MK members, to speak as co-rapporteurs at meetings, and thus gave the oppositions a platform to advance their views.

There now developed a bitter struggle for advantage in preparation for the conference. Both the MK supporters and the oppositionists accused each other of insisting on proportionality in sending delegates when they were in a minority, and of taking all the seats when in a majority. In principle, proportionality was the rule in these elections and therefore the conference accurately reflected the relative strength of the positions.

Opposition motions of no confidence in the MK were passed at delegate meetings in Zamoskvoretskii, Baumanskii and Gorodskoi raions, and also at the XII Moscow uezd (the area in the immediate vicinity of the city) party conference (5-7 November 1920).<sup>74</sup> A delegate meeting in Khamovnicheskii raion on 10 November, chaired by Drozhzhin (a future signatory to the Trotsky-Bukharin trade union platform), called for reelections to

71. Kochegarov (1969), p.158.

72. loc.cit.

74. KT, 14 November 1920.

the MK and accused it of providing 'insufficient leadership in soviet construction', especially in regard to the Moscow soviet. This meeting, attended by 56 delegates and 20 active party workers, adopted the RK's work for September and October delivered by Kotov, and elected the raion party control commission.<sup>75</sup> At a delegate meeting in Rogozhsko-Simonovskii raion on 12 November, with 70 delegates, Minkov gave the MK report, Lisitsyn the RK's, and Ignatov the opposition's resolution, which was passed after a heated discussion. A raion control commission was elected.<sup>76</sup> The resolutions expressing a lack of confidence in the MK, together with the results of the voting, were immediately printed by the oppositions in the form of leaflets and distributed in the raions. There was only very rarely a mention of their victories in the official Moscow party paper Kommunisticheskii trud.

Five out of the seven RPO's were therefore to varying degrees and from differing viewpoints critical of the MK. In the other two the MK tried to rally support. A delegate meeting in Sokol'nicheskii raion on 1 November 1920 strongly endorsed 'the political activity of the MK' and urged that it took a strong line against the oppositionists 'who could weaken party members with low consciousness'.<sup>77</sup> While supporting the MK in the party debate this raion after November was to become a stronghold of Trotsky's trade union position. The debates cut across the conventional label of 'opposition' depending on the

75. KT, 13 November 1920.            76. KT, 14 November 1920.

77. KT, 3 November 1920; Kochegarov 1969, p.159.

issue.<sup>78</sup> In Krasnopresnenskii raion at the end of October Minkov's and Lisitsyn's resolution supporting the MK was passed, but the motion called on the MK to strengthen its control over the Moscow soviet and the trade union as part of the battle against bureaucracy and glavkocracy.<sup>79</sup>

The situation in the MPO led to increasing concern in the TsK. After preliminary discussion in the Orgburo and Politburo in early November, the TsK plenum on 9 November decided to reinforce the MK by sending two TsK members onto the committee to be elected at the November conference, and sent others to speak in the raions on behalf of the MK.<sup>80</sup> Lenin himself became increasingly concerned. At the delegate meeting in Baumanskii raion on 18 November he criticised not so much the views as the activities of the Workers' Opposition. In the lively discussion following Bukharin's and Ignatov's speeches Lenin called for more attention to be devoted to practical economic issues rather than

78. Kotov in Sokol'nicheskii raion, for example, was the scourge of the Workers' Opposition up to November 1920. Long an exponent of militarised forms in the party, at the 10 September 1920 Sokol'nicheskii raion delegate meeting he once again called for the 'RK apparatus to be turned into a state of the military type' (P, 10 September 1920). The basic logic of his position rested on the awareness of the lack of party activists, and at this meeting he called for the MK and TsK to send more to the raion. At that time the whole burden of party work in the raion of about 2000 members fell on 208 party activists, 160 of whom were organisers in cells and factories without cells, while 48 were agitators and propagandists (Desyat' let Yu.O.K., p.14). He threw in his lot with Trotsky's TU platform which drove him into 'opposition' but did not change his views on the way that the party was to be organised or his hostility to the Workers' Opposition. In the later stages of the TU debate, therefore, when Trotsky's TU platform had changed and de facto voting alliances were made with the Workers' Opposition against the MK, Kotov's presence in the opposition was anomalous.

79. KT, 28 October 1920.

80. Kochegarov (1969), p.160.

to debate.<sup>81</sup> An increasingly important factor in the debates was the return of communists from the fronts. At an extended meeting of cell secretaries and other activists in Rogozhsko-Simonovskii raion on 18 November Myasnikov's attack on the oppositions was vigorously supported by a group who had recently returned from the fronts. They argued that 'the party and party workers require the old party discipline, the hardness (zakalennost') of the army...'.<sup>82</sup> No vote was taken but clearly the official line was bolstered by their support.

e. The IV Moscow guberniya party conference (20-23 November 1920)

The conference was marked by the acrimony of debate.<sup>83</sup> It heard a major report from Lenin, looked at the economic situation of the country (Rykov), the tasks of production propaganda (Bukharin), considered the work of the outgoing MK and elected a new one, the topic which engendered the sharpest debate, and elected a control commission for the guberniya and a revisional commission. In his main address to the conference on 21 November Lenin stressed that economic reconstruction was the main task following victory in the war. His speech was remarkable, however,

81. There is no stenogram of this speech. Quoted by P. Zaslavskii, Vospominaniya o V.I. Lenine, vol.3, M. 1960, pp.182-4, and Kochegarov 1969, p.160. No vote was taken and the meeting ended with elections to the conference, KT, 20 November 1920.

82. KT, 20 November 1920.

83. On the first day 289 delegates with voting rights attended, though 320 were due to attend, and 89 with consultative status. The conference presidium consisted of representatives of all the main positions: Alekseev, Boguslavskii, Bubnov, Ignatov, Kamenev, Minkov, and Pyatnitskii. Pyatnitskii and Kamenev chaired the sessions, KT, 21 November 1920.

in that for the first time it was declared publicly that the party was suffering a crisis, and that it contained opposition groupings. On the party debate he offered no initiative and instead called for 'the most rapid liquidation of the so-called opposition line'.<sup>84</sup>

The report on the work of the MK over the past six months aroused the greatest controversy, and discussion ranged over the whole question of party organisation in general. Minkov presented the MK's case, with Bubnov as the co-rapporteur (20 November) and discussion was opened the next morning over two resolutions proposed by Kamenev and Ignatov. In the voting Kamenev's motion was passed by 154 votes to Ignatov's 124.<sup>85</sup> The majority resolution admitted that the war had resulted in the curtailment of inner-party democracy, but insisted that victory '...would create the possibility and necessity to move to a new stage in the internal organisational life of the party...'. The basic premise for reforms, it argued, was the 'merciless elimination' of all intrigues and 'unprincipled little groups' and for party work to be conducted in a delovoi way.<sup>86</sup> Several concrete proposals were adopted to improve the work of the MK and to 'revive' the communist fractions in the trade unions.<sup>87</sup>

Ignatov's resolution contained a wide-ranging critique of the work of the MK over the last half year: poor organisational and political leadership, as shown in the decrepitude of the MK's

84. Lenin PSS, vol.42, pp.33, 35.

85. Otchet o rabote Moskovskoi obshchepartiinoi konferentsii, 20-22 noyabr' 1920g., (materialy dlya dokladchikov), M. 1920, p.6. KT, 23 November 1920 reports that the vote was 163 to 115.

86. Otchet, p.5.

87. KT, 23 November 1920.



organisation-instruction department, so that every attempt to guide the raions showed a 'lack of faith' in the abilities of the raions themselves through 'pettyfogging supervision': poor links and lack of planned leadership over the trade unions and soviets which isolated the MK from fresh reserves of the working class; all this had encouraged the development of various groups and conflicts which the MK could only deal with through 'surgical operations' which encouraged passivity in the party out of fear of punishment: reform was blocked by a group on the MK who had hindered the application of the IX conference resolutions. Finally, the resolution claimed continuity over two and a half years in its opposition on the basis of its demand for the application of democratic centralism.<sup>88</sup>

Following the defeat of their proposals the oppositions twice met in separate conclaves and declared that they absolved themselves of further responsibility for the work of the MK. On 22 November voting took place for the new MK. There had initially been two lists but the majority at the conference withdrew its own<sup>89</sup> in favour of one drawn up by the TsK at a meeting of the Politburo with Lenin present on 19 November.<sup>90</sup> The Politburo decided to enlarge the MK from 31 to 39 members in order to give greater representation to lower levels of the party and to workers. The idea was to renew at least half of the MK to the benefit of worker communists still on the shopfloor, to include some party workers from other organisations, and for the list to include some members of the opposition and thus to avoid

88. Otchet, pp.4-5.

89. Otchet, p.6.

90. Lenin PSS, vol.42, p.556.

an overt split. The expansion and 'workerising' of the MK prefigured the TsK's own expansion, on Lenin's insistence, in 1923, as part of the attempt to prevent the consolidation of the central party bureaucracy. However, the opposition demand for proportionality put forward by Bogulavskii and others was rejected by the congress, and scorned by Lenin as rendering the MK nedelovoi.<sup>91</sup> The TsK list was adopted with 164 votes.<sup>92</sup>

Following the conference the party debate continued, with, for example, a strong attack on bureaucratism by the Workers' Opposition at a general party meeting in Zamoskvorech'e,<sup>93</sup> but in general attention was increasingly concentrated on the trade union debate. For a time the issue of party reform was lost in the welter of conflicting positions and manouevring associated with the second debate, and by the time the party debate once again emerged the very premises on which the calls for party democracy had been founded had changed owing to the bitterness and length of the trade union debate and because of the tide of popular protest.

91. Lenin PSS, vol.42, pp.39-40.

92. KT, 23 November 1920. For the full list, see Appendix 14. It included: F.A. Sergeev (Artem) sent to work in the MK by the TsK and elected MK secretary; N.P. Rastopchin, party member since 1903 and one of the leaders of the workers' movement in Nizhni Novgorod and Kostroma; I.A. Zelenskii, party member since 1906, 1920-21 on the presidium of the Moscow soviet, 1920-25 secretary of the MK, then secretary of the Central Asia Bureau of the TsK; Ya.V. Dorofeev, party member since 1907, worker, elected to MK secretariat; A.I. Krinitskii, headed MK organisation and instruction department, his deputy for work in the countryside was Rastopchin; T.G. Zamorenov; member of MK Shkiryatov. The list included some members of the oppositions: T.V. Sapronov, E.N. Ignatov (party member since 1912, worker), V.A. Kotov, R.B. Rafail, Boguslavskii, E.V. Uryvaev, Korzinov (party member since 1904, worker), V.N. Yakovleva.

93. P, 30 November 1920; Zorkii, p.17; Lenin PSS, vol.42, p.49.

### 3. Organisational reform

Following the November conference the party organisation as a whole concentrated on improving the work of the party departments and cells, and on combatting the increasing discontent in the city by intensified agitprop work. Reforms were also instituted in this period, as mentioned, in the MGSPS and the Moscow soviet. The situation at the fronts had improved dramatically: for the first time in three years no major armies confronted the Soviet state, and the allied blockade had been lifted on 16 November.

The MK session of 1 December 1920 heard Artem, the MK secretary, give details of the campaign to implement the November conference decisions on democratising party life, which included the organisation of general party meetings and the involvement of cell secretaries in party work. Responsibilities were allocated amongst the MK members.<sup>94</sup> Members of the opposition were given posts and indeed, it should be borne in mind that participants in the debates were usually burdened by administrative and political tasks (such as Ignatov in the Komsomol). For the first time since the beginning of the civil war the MK had at its disposal a reserve of experienced cadres and could devote itself to organising the party itself. At this stage the centralistic

94. Minkov was appointed head of the agitation and instruction department, with Boguslavskii and Zaslavskii members of its collegium; Sorin was appointed head of agitprop; Rastopchin headed work in the countryside; Korzinov was head of the subbotnik department while a commission was to consider their future; Breslav was head of the military department; S.N. Smidovich head of the female worker department; Artem the head of the communist fraction in the Moscow soviet (note that this post was not elected by the fraction itself); Shkiryatov and Boguslavskii were to be responsible for the trade unions; and Ignatov was to be the MK representative on the MK RKSM, KT, 2 December 1920.

practices of the war period were tempered by the reform programmes of the September and November party conferences.

In January 1921 the MK set itself an ambitious programme to improve the workings of the party organisation. Relations within and between departments were to be defined to avoid parallelism, cells were to be drawn closer to their higher party instance, and the content of their work improved. A uniform system of party committees was to be instituted at all levels, and the relationships between the party committees and party fractions of the soviets, ispolkomy, trade unions, and Komsomol were to be defined.<sup>95</sup> While much had been made of these points during the civil war little had been achieved, and indeed the importance of the war period and its enduring legacy was that it had seen the formulation of the tasks for the succeeding period. During the war the 'shock' approach to mobilisations and party work in general through special 'weeks' had disrupted progress towards the effective integration of all party members into a uniform party system. As the November conference had illustrated, the premium was now on effective and detailed guidance from the centre balanced by competent lower involvement, and on this all the oppositions were agreed.

An important aspect of this period was the consolidation of the MK's claim to be the supreme arbiter on the disposition of party members. As part of the reform programme the political departments in transport had been abolished in September 1920, restoring normal trade union practices and allowing the

95. Otchet MK za yanvar' 1921g., p.47.

prerogatives of the MK in this area to be consolidated.<sup>96</sup> It was in January 1921, as mentioned, that the army cells were directly integrated into the RPO's by the abolition of the MK military department. The introduction of a uniform party ticket and more accurate registration of members enabled the MK to plan the disposition of communists more effectively. The MK was now redistributing party members from soviet institutions to strengthen factory cells, moving members from the city to the countryside, and concentrating resources in the udarnyi enterprises. At the same time the MK systematised the selection of party members from cells for more 'responsible' work.<sup>97</sup> The MK jealously defended its prerogatives in this field, and warned that punitive measures would be taken against institutions that used communists demobilised from the army without first going through the MK.<sup>98</sup> In January 1921 Yakovleva insisted that all appointments had to go through the MK and warned against raion organisations 'seizing' demobilised communists.<sup>99</sup>

The general right of the TsK and the MK to deploy party forces wherever they saw fit was a factor in the debates, with widespread mobilisations continuing even after the war for various economic and organisational tasks. The Baumanskii oppositionists had accused the MK of abusing the right, and Kollontai at the IX conference protested against the practice of sending inconvenient people 'to eat peaches' far away from Moscow for too frank criticism.<sup>100</sup> On the eve of the

96. Otchet MK za yanvar', p.47.

97. ibid., p.48.

98. KT, 14 August 1920; Otchet MK za yanvar' 1920g., p.48.

99. KT, 4 February 1921.

100. IX konf. RKP, p.188.

November conference, indeed, Bukharin had argued that 'we must heal the Moscow organisation' by getting rid of the most quarrelsome elements and replacing them by new people from outside of Moscow, though he argued that even the most extreme elements were not to be expelled from the party.<sup>101</sup>

One issue which became an important test case of the MK's ability to organise the mass of membership was participation in subbotniks. There had long been criticism over the irregular attendance of communists<sup>102</sup> and it was considered an infringement of party discipline not to take part.<sup>103</sup> An MK circular of September 1920 stated that the overwhelming majority of Moscow's communists avoided participation, at about 85-90% of the organisation, including almost all responsible workers and most middle-level party workers. In the light of the IX conference decisions against privileges, the MK stated, this massive avoidance of party duties would be countered by a range of punitive measures up to demotion to candidate status for members and expulsion for candidates. The subbotnik departments would be strengthened by the addition of full-time competent activists.<sup>104</sup>

With the ending of the war the subbotniks came under increasing criticism by communists as an irrational use of labour. Ignatov at the X congress called them a 'burden' and

101. P, 16 November 1920. Both the Komsomol and Baumanskii oppositionists had only been suspended from the party.

102. KT, 17 August 1920.

103. Otchet MK za iyul' 1920g., p.15.

104. Otchet MK za sentyabr' 1920g., p.51.

declared that they had become a purely formal exercise.<sup>105</sup>

Rafail argued that the soul of the 'great beginning' (velikii pochin) had been destroyed by the payment of rations as a reward for attendance, the obligatory nature of participation twice a month, and punishment for non-attendance.<sup>106</sup> Nevertheless, their defenders, such as Korzinov at the head of the MK subbotnik department, argued that they made up for the shortfall of labour and insisted that they still acted as a model of revolutionary labour.<sup>107</sup> Disenchantment with the subbotniks was reflected in the decline in attendance of subbotniks at the end of 1920 and early 1921 on the part of communists and non-party people alike.<sup>108</sup>

Despite the opposition to them the commission on the subbotniks reported its findings to the MK on 25 January 1921 and insisted that the active participation of communists could transform them from 'barracks type compulsion' similar to 'forced labour' to 'schools of communist labour' once again. Attendance was reduced to once a month<sup>109</sup> and the general provisions of the report were adopted by the February 1921 guberniya conference.<sup>110</sup> With the introduction of NEP the subbotniks continued as an inspirational movement but were organised more rarely. The unlimited right of the party committees to deploy party members

105. X s"ezd RKP, p.242.

106. KT, 23 December 1920.

107. KT, 11, 21 December 1920.

108. KT, 21 December 1920, 30 January 1921; Otchet MK za yanvar' 1921g., p.14.

109. KT, 2 February 1921.

110. V Moskovskaya gubernskaya konferentsiya RKP(b): kratkii ocherk i rezolyutsii, M. 1921, p.15.

as they saw fit was an important element in the consolidation of party committee power.

A foretaste of the type of changes that would take place with the transition to NEP can be seen from the work of the Sokol'nicheskii RK in the last four months of 1920. In this raion, as we have seen the reform movement gained little support, and indeed, it was opposed by the militarisers such as Kotov. In its report the RK argued that the 'organisational crisis' in the party, associated with the transition from military to economic priorities, could only be overcome if the self-activity of the party masses was channelled into an organisational course:

...We must always remember that the struggle on the economic front demands no less a centralised party apparatus, no less discipline, than the military front.<sup>111</sup>

Hence even before Lenin's argument at the XI party congress that a retreat required greater discipline than an advance this raion had formulated a programme which justified the increased power of the party apparatus in a time of peace because of the nature of the economic tasks facing the country.<sup>112</sup> Amongst the concrete uses to which the RK's ability to dispose of its membership was put was the system of transferring (peremeshchenie) some of those who had held responsible party or soviet positions for over a year to the shopfloor, and replacing them by a draft of 3% from

111. Otchet Sok. RK-ta, p.3.

112. A rough indication of the increased activity of the bureau, the heart of the party apparatus, can be seen from the fact that in the last four months of 1920 the RK met only ten times in plenary session, while the bureau met 33 times (ibid., pp.5-6). Figures are lacking for the frequency of meetings earlier, but clearly the increased activity of the bureau, meeting on average twice a week, is marked.



the cells.<sup>113</sup> There is no indication of to what extent this system was employed.

A strategy had been developed in which reform came to signify only the improvement in the effectiveness of the committees themselves, and the democratic demands of the opposition were lost in the process. The end of the war saw the consolidation of the powers of the committees over their own organisations and as the general controlling bodies in the localities. Before this strategy could be implemented the MPO was to witness a yet more bitter round in the debates as the party prepared itself for the X congress.

113. Otchet Sok. RK, p.8.

## CHAPTER 10

### The Defeat of the Reform Movements

The improved international and military circumstances had stimulated hopes at the IX party conference and the November party conference amongst both the majority and the oppositions that the worst aspects of militarisation in the party, state and economy could be dispensed with. Instead, at the end of 1920 Trotsky outlined a programme for the intensification of war communist policies, no longer as a temporary expedient necessitated by the war, but as a general strategy for development predicated on Russia's continued isolation and the need for continued internal coercion. Flying in the face of the prospects of peace and increased purchases from the West, ignoring the growing demand for democracy in the party and an end to the split between activists and rank and file members, under-rating the strikes and disturbances among the working class and peasantry, Trotsky now launched a programme and debate whose enduring result was the paralysis of continued reform in the party. The party debate, and the trade union debate from the end of 1920 provoked by Trotsky's intervention took place against a background of increasing unrest in the city.

#### 1. The crisis of the regime

From the summer of 1920 the economic crisis gradually developed into a political crisis of the regime. Strife within the party was paralleled by peasant uprisings and worker protest culminating in the Kronstadt events in March 1921. It was at this time that Russell observed that free elections would have swept

the Bolsheviks from power. Supply shortages were compounded by disorganisation on the railways, and a drought in summer 1920 made drinking water unsafe in Moscow. Fires in the peat workings and forests reduced fuel supplies and sent a pall of smoke for several weeks over the city, to the inconvenience of the delegates to the II congress of the III International in July. Cold weather set in earlier than usual in September. To add to the difficulties there were rumours that the government was planning to close the markets and stamp out the vestiges of free trade.<sup>1</sup> In short, the period was marked by the collapse of the 'proletarian-natural economy'.<sup>2</sup> The new factors in the disturbances were that the immediate threat of a White restoration had been lifted, confidence in an imminent socialist revolution on a world scale had declined and with it hope for large-scale aid, and industry was in an all too obvious spiral of decline despite the application of compulsory labour duty. Protests against supply shortages were now joined by demands for free trade, free labour and the easing of repression.

Disturbances in the city were stimulated by supply and other shortages, which themselves were exacerbated by the concentration on supplying the needs of the army at the expense of the population and workers (Part I). For example, a 'mutiny', took place in the Moscow barracks in August 1920 when bast shoes (lapti) were issued instead of boots.<sup>3</sup> In order to meet the material needs of the soldiers a meeting on 9 October 1920 of the

1. Harrison, Marooned, p.223. According to Farbman, Bolshevism in Retreat, p.261, the markets were indeed closed in Moscow and Petrograd at the end of 1920.

2. Kritsman, p.225.

3. Harrison, Marooned, p.185.

MK and party activists, with Lenin and Rykov in attendance, instructed the MK to ensure that the working day was increased to 10 hours. Priority was to be given to the clothing and leather industries in order to supply the army.<sup>4</sup> Concern over the political atmosphere in the barracks was expressed at the 14 October 1920 meeting of the MK military department with commissars and cell representatives. Measures were taken to increase agitprop in the barracks and to alleviate some of the worst hardships of the soldiers.<sup>5</sup> By concentrating the meagre resources of supply and materials to pacify the army the urban population was subjected to intensified labour discipline and increased shortages.

The worsening supply situation was discussed by the MK and party activists on 29-30 September 1920.<sup>6</sup> The situation deteriorated and from 21 January 1921, instead of the minimum of 44 wagons a day of grain required to feed the city, only 33 were arriving daily. On 22 January the bread issue in Moscow, Petrograd, Kronstadt, and Ivanovo-Voznesensk was cut by a third. Rations were further cut on 30 January for office staff and those not involved in physical labour.<sup>7</sup> From this point sporadic disturbances developed into a general assault on the war communist system.

There are few details on the disturbances in Moscow and therefore it is impossible to analyse the structure of the protest movement, its leadership and organisation, except to

4. Otchet MK za oktyabr' 1920g., p.3.

5. KT, 20 October 1920.

6. P, 3 October 1920.

7. KT, 1 February 1921.

comment that the Mensheviks and SRs did play some part in them, but at the same time they were supported by a broad stratum of workers disillusioned with current policies. As Liebman put it, the Mensheviks became 'the political voice of a working-class reality'.<sup>8</sup> The pattern of the movement is fairly clear. Meetings in factories and plants gathered and criticised government policies, beginning with supply and developing into general political criticism. There are only very general indications of inter-plant contacts, usually confined to synchronising street demonstrations, and even less of attempts to form a national movement comparable to the workers' conferences of 1918.

By insisting that the disturbances were no more than supply riots, manipulated by Menshevik and SR counter-revolutionaries, the government imputed to the participants a pre-industrial level of consciousness. When, however, communists at meetings suggested that the discontent was associated purely with 'stomachs' the comment usually aroused a storm of protest.<sup>9</sup> Food shortages were the catalyst that brought out the underlying dissatisfaction of workers. With the deurbanisation and partial deindustrialisation of the city, the changes in the size and composition of the working class, and the development of a new type of state, society and labour were no longer governed by industrial capitalist but by coercive state socialist social relations. The protest movement can be seen as an inversion of

8. Liebman, p.267.

9. S.S. Maslov, Rossiia posle chetyrekh let revolyutsii, Paris 1922, p.155.

the Marxian idea of the development of class consciousness: the class may no longer have been a class in itself, but it remained a class for itself. While the authorities ascribed to the movement no more than what Leninists called a trade union consciousness, even the best party thinkers of the time could put forward no general analysis of the relationship between the working class and the new state, and hence the movement could only articulate the first demands, often couched in traditional language, of the depoliticised socialist labour system.

With an increasing number of factories going on strike, the MK held a series of emergency meetings with the MGSPS, the Moscow soviet, and party activists from the raions. They tried to work out a unified response to what was called 'the supply crisis and wage misunderstandings'.<sup>10</sup> One of the issues was the closure of factories because of the economic crisis. The MGSPS presidium, now in a more assertive mood, met on 27 January 1921. The guberniya metalworkers' union was censured for not having kept the MGSPS informed on the situation developing in the metal plants. The MGSPS decided to insist to the MSNKh that no economic body in Moscow had the right to close factories without consulting the MGSPS. Lozovskii was assigned urgently to form a commission to look into the 'abnormalities' at certain plants and to take the necessary measures.<sup>11</sup> One result of the crisis atmosphere was the proposal to hold meetings in factories and

10. Otchet MK za yanvar' 1921g., p.4. A commission to improve the byt (living conditions) of workers had existed since November 1920 with party and TU representatives. In early 1921 the Cheka played the key role in it, Berkman, Myth, p.307.

11. Protokoly MGSPS, 41, 1921, p.12.

the other measures mentioned in chapter 3. At the same time the MGSPS urged the MChK not to take further repressive measures and for the announcement of factory closures to be suspended.<sup>12</sup> Supply, the economic crisis and the decline of industry, and Cheka repression therefore appear to have been the key issues.

As in 1917 it was the metalworkers who led the way. Against the crisis background the I Moscow guberniya metalworkers' union conference met in Moscow from 2-4 February 1921.<sup>13</sup> The first speakers called for the personal inviolability of delegates to be respected, a demand accepted by the conference chairman, Smidovich. There then followed, according to one emigre source, a flood of passionate denunciations of Bolshevik power in which crimes against the country and workers were listed and individual communists singled out as criminals and liars. A resolution was passed calling for the introduction of free trade and the replacement of forced requisitioning by a fixed natural tax.<sup>14</sup> As the report in Pravda noted: 'A complete break between the party and the masses, between the masses and the trade unions, was felt'.<sup>15</sup>

Lenin's contribution on the last day of the conference admitted that relations between the working class and the peasantry could now be reviewed. In other words, his thoughts were turning to the idea that requisitioning might be replaced by a tax in kind, and indeed he reported that in 13 gubernii

12. loc.cit.

13. About a thousand delegates attended but apparently no registration took place so it is impossible to establish how many were communists, P, 8 February 1921.

14. Maslov, pp.152-3.

15. P, 8 February 1921.

requisitioning had been halted.<sup>16</sup> A few days after this meeting (8 February 1921) Lenin penned his draft theses on replacing requisitioning by the tax.<sup>17</sup>

The conference passed a resolution against 'privileged' rations (spetsstavki), including those for the SNK and for scholars, and against the issue of goods of own production, especially in the food industry.<sup>18</sup> In his speech Kamenev was justified to claim that they were being reduced.<sup>19</sup> Aware of the unpopularity of these privileges the MGSPS since September 1920, as mentioned, had tried to reduce the numbers receiving them.<sup>20</sup> Opposition to them was a reflection of a powerful anti-specialist current, noted by the chairman of the MSNKh Likhachev at the II guberniya soviet congress in December 1920,<sup>21</sup> and tapped by the Workers' Oppositionists and Ignatovtsy at this time. This mood combined traditional hostility to the intelligentsia and the egalitarianism of socialist first principles (both dominant in 1917) and were fanned by the general scarcity. Kamenev told the Moscow soviet plenum on 15 February 1921 that he had proposed the abolition of privileged rations to the TsK because of the metalworkers' resolution, and he called for a campaign against the issuing of goods of own production.<sup>22</sup>

16. Lenin PSS, vol.42, p.308. 17. Lenin PSS, vol.42, p.333.

18. KT, 5 February 1921; P, 8 February 1921.

19. KT, 8 February 1921.

20. Obzor deyatel'nosti MGSPS, p.47.

21. KT, 17 December 1920.

22. The SNK rations had been issued to 10,000 responsible people; academic ones to 1900 in Moscow and another 4449 in the country; and about 50,000 in rear army institutions received them, KT, 16 February 1921.



The disturbances came to a head in February 1921. The month was marked by severe frosts in the city and in several factories a white flag had once again been run up in the traditional sign of protest. At some unspecified date in early February 1921 a resolution was delivered to the chairman of VTsIK (Kalinin) by a special delegation of workers from Khamovnicheskii raion with three demands: the restoration of free trade; the convocation of a legislative assembly; and an immediate change in economic policy 'which would stop provoking the hostility of other powers'.<sup>23</sup>

The Moscow street disturbances began, significantly enough in the light of Krestinskii's comments on the money printing press as the 'machine gun' against the capitalist financial system, with a strike at the Vtorov money printing works in Khamovniki on 20 or 21 February. The military units called in refused to open fire, and they were replaced by armed communist detachments (ChON) who fired at the striking workers, killing and injuring several of them. That evening mass protest meetings were held at the university, on the railways, and at the higher women's course. The following days several factories struck. A demonstration was organised in Khamovniki attended by about 1500 people who tried to call out the soldiers. The units in the raion garrison, however, were disarmed and locked in the barracks as a precaution. All of Moscow's communists were now mobilised and organised in armed detachments. There was sporadic shooting as these detachments came across groups of protesters in the streets.<sup>24</sup>

23. Maslov, p.155.

24. SV, 5, 5 April 1921, p.14; Maslov, p.156; Maximoff, p.160.

The climax of the movement came on 23 February 1921 with a major street demonstration in which about 10,000 workers participated. The Bolsheviks and their policies were severely criticised by the speakers. On that day Moscow was placed under martial law with a 24-hour watch on factories by the communist detachments and trustworthy army units. On following days the leading Soviet personalities such as Kalinin, Kuibyshev and Krupskaya were mobilised by the MK to speak in the raions, and on 1 March 1921 the Moscow soviet issued a proclamation calling for calm,<sup>25</sup> for workers not to go on strike, and for soldiers not to give in to 'provocation, which in the guise of solidarity with working people in fact weakens unity'.<sup>26</sup> Kamenev later admitted that the disturbances were accompanied by a wide-spread go-slow (volynka, or zaderzhka).<sup>27</sup>

In the plants a movement developed to recall Bolshevik deputies from the Moscow and raion soviets and to replace them, one report claimed, by Mensheviks standing as non-party candidates. Other plants, instead of recalling their Bolshevik deputies, passed Menshevik or anarchist mandates (nakaz) to instruct them.<sup>28</sup> At the same time wide-scale arrests, especially of Mensheviks, deprived the movement of its leadership. On 25 February 1921, for example, 160 people were arrested at a meeting and held in Butyrskii gaol (the infamous Butyrka), though after the Kronstadt

25. P, 1 March 1921; SV, 5, 5 April 1921, p.15.

26. KT, 1 March 1921.

27. KT, 18 January 1922.

28. In Baumanskii raion 83% of the deputies were Bolshevik, many of whom sympathised with the Workers' Opposition. The Sal'mson plant elected a 'non-party' Menshevik; the Avtoremont plant adopted a Menshevik nakaz; and the Manometr plant elected a Menshevik, all in February 1921, Manievich, p.175.

events and the passing of the crisis the majority were released.<sup>29</sup>

Sporadic disturbances continued into March. There were disturbances at the Menshevik-dominated Bromlei works on 5 March, the fifth of the year, resulting in the usual arrests of workers.<sup>30</sup> A general meeting of the Bromlei plant on 25 March called for new elections to the Moscow soviet. The management dispersed the meeting but the workers called on other plants to support the calls for new elections. The ringleaders were as usual arrested. The Moscow soviet itself had called for new elections but they had been postponed by order of the TsK so that the situation could calm down.<sup>31</sup> After a delay of several weeks the elections were in fact held in April 1921 accompanied by a bitter campaign and the usual claims by the Mensheviks of electoral malpractice.<sup>32</sup> The results were remarkable in that the protest vote returned over a quarter of the total as non-party deputies (Table 22). On a turn-out of 50.6%, many factories, including some of the largest, did not return communist deputies.<sup>33</sup>

The demands of the Moscow protest movement for the three freedoms - labour, trade and political - with an unlinking of the

29. SV, 5, 5 April 1921, p.15.

30. Maximoff, p.185.

31. SV, 6, 20 April 1921, p.15.

32. SV, 7, 4 May 1921.

33. KT, 13, 14 May 1921. Worker hostility appears to have continued into 1922. The declaration of the 22 (signed by Shlyapnikov, Kollontai, et.al.) to the Comintern EC of 26 February 1922 claimed that 'The last elections to the Moscow soviet [January 1922] were in effect boycotted by workers. Even those workers who voted for communists did so out of fear of repression...', XI s"ezd RKP, p.754.

soviets from party tutelage were echoed in other conferences and cities.<sup>34</sup> But in Kronstadt on 28 February 1921, on the eve of the X party congress, the demands took the form of insurrection. The Moscow movement gradually ebbed because of the lack of practical support from the soldiers, faced by armed communists and the Cheka, the unity of the authorities in opposing the protesters, a blanket on press coverage, and timely concessions in the form of emergency food supplies and goods. While even anti-Bolshevik observers conceded that the movement was not opposed to socialism (i.e., did not propose the restoration of private ownership in industry)<sup>35</sup> it lacked any coherent expression. While the February 1917 days had a long tradition of struggle and social self-defence organisations to call on and were institutionalised by the soviets, trade unions, and parties, the novel experience of opposition under a communist regime, culminating in Moscow in the February 1921 days, found these forms of organisational practice colonised by its adversary.

The communist party as a whole remained united in the face of the disturbances, a unity symbolised by the participation of the Workers' Opposition in suppressing the Kronstadt movement. Workers' Oppositionists were included in the list of TsK activists sent to calm workers in the raions. Kiselev and Kollontai, for instance, were dispatched with Lunacharskii, Nogin and Rykunov to pacify Baumanskii raion.<sup>36</sup> The views of the party rank and file are less clear. In Kronstadt many communists

34. SV, 4, 18 March 1921, p.6.

35. E.g., SV, 4, 18 March 1921, p.6; Maslov, pp.157-8.

36. KT, 1 March 1921.

joined the insurgents, but in Moscow little information is available. There are indications that some party members in the factories sympathised with the calls for a change in economic policy. Letters from the 'Aviapribor' plant cell, for example, in the first instance to the Krasnopresnenskii RK and then to the MK, complained of the burdens put on the plant by Soviet power and of the near starvation there. The second letter, signed by the cell secretary who called himself a member of the 'workers' communist party, claimed that it expressed the anger of all communists.<sup>37</sup> Essentially though, the party presented a single front against the disturbances, and the debates remained confined to the party. Nevertheless, Lenin waged an increasingly vigorous struggle against the continuation of the debates. Meeting with Moscow activists on 24 February 1921 he asserted that 'Moscow has broken all records in the discussion' and warned that 'we can no longer tolerate such things'.<sup>38</sup>

## 2. The trade union debate

### a. The platforms

While the party debate tackled issues that allowed concrete reform proposals to emerge which commanded substantial support, as at the IX party conference and in the MK, the trade union debate was bitterly divisive and appeared 'artificial and almost unreal'.<sup>39</sup> At a time of the collapse of the state-run proletarian-natural economy on the one hand, and of worker unrest on the other, Trotsky proposed transferring yet more functions to

37. KT, 19 February 1921.

38. Lenin PSS, vol.42, p.350.

39. Liebman, p.299.

the state, and the Workers' Opposition called for the economy to be transferred to the management of a congress of producers. Both demands required an almost revolutionary alteration in the patterns of authority established since October 1917, and this at a time not of revolutionary elan but after nearly 3 years of exhausting civil war. Hence the powerful attraction to the party membership of Lenin's moderate position on the TU question, but the price to pay was the end of democratic reforms in the party.

As we have seen Trotsky envisaged radical changes both in the party and the trade unions, but it was to the unions that he turned first. Militarisation of the economy had already been developing but at the end of 1920 Trotsky tried to reverse the basic programme outlined at the VIII party congress for the ultimate transfer of the management of the economy to the trade unions, and instead called for the merger of the unions with the state. His motion presented to, and rejected by, the communist fraction of the V all-Russian TU conference on 3 November 1920 argued that the trade unions were suffering from a 'profound internal crisis' and that the only way to revive them was through a 'shake-up' (peretryakhivanie) and their 'statification'. The screws of war communism were to be tightened.<sup>40</sup>

He presented his ideas in the form of theses to the TsK plenum of 8-9 November, which also discussed the situation in the MPO. Trade unions were to be replaced by organisers on the Tsektran model, labour was to be militarised, and so on.<sup>41</sup> The plenum split several ways, and although Lenin's resolution

40. Lenin PSS, vol.42, p,235.

41. loc. cit.

rejecting Trotsky's plans was carried (10-4) ten TsK members remained neutral and later formed the so-called buffer group (Bukharin, Preobrazhenskii, et al.). A five-man commission under Zinoviev was appointed to look into the question in an attempt to limit discussion.<sup>42</sup> The interdiction on public debate was ineffective and was repealed by the TsK plenum on 24 December 1920, and the questions on the agenda for the X party congress were declared open to debate. That day Trotsky aired his views at a wide discussion meeting at the ex-Zimin theatre, and the next day his brochure 'The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions' was published. The trade union debate was open.

The Workers' Opposition's main demands centred on giving the TUs a greater role in managing the economy to be carried out by an all-Russian congress of producers. While the party was to remain the political head of the working class, the economic role of the state would be transferred to the working class itself. They criticised centralisation, the use of the specialist intelligentsia and the resulting bureaucratisation of the soviet state, and were wary of the union between the working class and the peasantry, all of which were considered distortions of the worker state. In other words their position reflected a profound distrust of 'intellectuals' and, therefore, they insisted on the 'workerisation' of the state and the party and an increase in

42. By now Zinoviev's indifference to party reform, which had a pedigree dating back to the VIII party congress in March 1919 and had only recently been expressed at the IX party conference in September 1920, had changed into enthusiastic support for more power to the nizy and he had become, in Myasnikov's words, 'a fantastic prophet of "workers' democracy"'. Myasnikov, for one, was not taken in, and in his article of early 1921 'Za partiyu' launched a virulent attack on Zinoviev's opportunism, Myasnikov, Izb. proiz., pp.284-7, 304.

trade union power.<sup>43</sup> The unions themselves, in their view, were to elect their own officers, and thus the party's monopoly over appointments was threatened. The programme of the Workers' Opposition represented a major breach in the whole structure of the party process as it had developed during war communism, and hence aroused Lenin's ire. On the other hand, the TU movement itself as it had developed during war communism was hardly a paragon of proletarian solidarity, as illustrated by the approach of the MGSPS to non-Bolshevik trade unionism, and in particular to the print union. Just as the trade unions themselves only remained potential managers of the economy, so the Workers' Opposition critique contained too many unresolved theoretical and practical questions to mount an effective challenge to the war communist labour system, let alone its economic system.

A central demand of the DCs was for the VSNKh presidium, the collegia of its departments and glavki to be proposed by the trade unions. The demand for obligatory candidature was supported by the buffer group. While arguing for a revision of war communist policies as they affected the party and the working class, none of the main opposition groups envisaged a relaxation in the countryside. At the end of 1920, for example, Osinskii argued against a tax in kind and in favour of greater proletarian influence in the countryside through sowing committees.<sup>44</sup>

The Ignatov group largely shared the analysis of the Workers' Opposition and agreed that the unions, through some form

43. The Workers' Opposition theses are in P, 25 January 1921 and X s"ezd RKP, pp.685-91. Their ideas were developed in Aleksandra Kollontai's Rabochaya Oppozitsiya, M. 1921.

44. Avrich, Kronstadt, p.17.



of national congress, were to manage the economy, but they were more realistic in insisting that this elected body was to be confirmed by VTsIK and thus ultimate responsibility would still lie with the party and state.<sup>45</sup> Up to the February 1921 guberniya party conference, as mentioned, they spoke on a TU platform of their own which shared many of the DC ideas, though they tended to vote with the Ten on TU issues, but at the conference they joined with the Workers' Opposition. The group placed their main emphasis on the unions not only as tools to inculcate communism in the working class, as in Lenin's position, but stressed that the unions themselves were the crucial aspect of the hegemony of the proletariat. Therefore the unions were to be strengthened and made genuinely democratic, and given greater powers in running the economy, broadly supervised by the party. No economic or union cadre was to be transferred without the agreement of the unions, a point conceded at this time (Part I).

The buffer group argued in favour of the gradual merging of the state and the unions, though the unions were still to mediate between the party and the masses as schools for communism.<sup>46</sup> By arguing for obligatory candidature by TUs to economic bodies the group also threatened the party's prerogatives in this crucial field. At the same time the communist fraction of VTsSPS on 4

45. The Ignatov TU theses were published in P, 19 January 1921. They were signed by E.N. Ignatov, A. Orekhov, G. Korzinov, M. Burovtsev, I. Maslov, Fonchenko, E. Kuranova, Lidak, and S. Smirnov. Schapiro is incorrect in stating that Ignatov represented only his personal opinion, Origin, p.284.

46. The buffer group's theses are in Partiya i soyuzy, Petrograd 1921, pp.371-7. They were signed by Bukharin, Larin, Preobrazhenskii, Serebryakov, Sokol'nikov, and Yakovleva, the secretary of the MK.

October 1920 argued that communist fractions could act independently of guberniya TU councils.<sup>47</sup> The whole edifice of democratic centralism as it had developed over the civil war was now under threat. All the opposition positions united in objecting to the 'petty supervision' of the party over the trade unions and, as Shlyapnikov put it, insisted that the party should have more faith in the collective experience of the unions.<sup>48</sup> Even Trotsky by January 1921 was no longer calling for a shake-up of the unions from above but called for greater economic powers to be transferred to them as they stood. As Kamenev pointed out, all the oppositions were promising more for the unions than Lenin's Platform of the Ten, and therefore an unofficial bloc began to form against Lenin's group.<sup>49</sup>

Lenin's initial encouragement of Trotsky's views on the intensified militarisation of the labour process had by November 1920 given way to deep misgivings. The September 1920 party conference had been a clear signal that a struggle similar to the one over the Brest peace would have to be waged once again to implement them. His doubts were deepened by the course of the party debate in Moscow, culminating in the 'two rooms' at the November Moscow conference. Once again the spectre of a split in the party was raised. Lenin now emerged in the unusual guise of the arch-conciliator: against the harshness of Trotsky's position; and opposed to the radical change envisaged by the Workers' Opposition and later the buffer group for the trade unions to control appointments to economic posts.

47. Profsoyuzy Moskvyy, M. 1975, pp.141-2.

48. Partiya i soyuzy, p.295.

49. KT, 21 January 1921.

As distinct from Trotsky's and Bukharin's view that the working class no longer needed to defend itself against its own state Lenin insisted that in a workers's state (a term which he regarded as 'an abstraction') such as the RSFSR, established with a peasant majority and ensnared in bureaucratic distortions, the workers' interest required separate representation, and this was the task of the trade unions.<sup>50</sup> At the 30 December meeting of communist trade unionists and the MGSPS Lenin stressed the vanguard role of the party, with the unions acting as the link between the vanguard and the masses.<sup>51</sup> This was the basis for Lenin's famous definition of the unions as transmission belts and as schools of communism, the basis of the Platform of the Ten.<sup>52</sup>

More and more the emphasis of Lenin's arguments stressed the danger of a split in the party, and the actual content of the debates were relegated to the background. On several occasions in late 1920 and the first weeks of January 1921 he had recognised the legitimacy of group struggle and ideological debate in the run-up to a party congress or conference,<sup>53</sup> but as the debates continued and, perhaps, as the position of his own group became the dominant one, a dramatic change took place. The issue increasingly became the debate itself and not the various arguments, which he insisted had a tendency towards the

50. Lenin PSS, vol.42, p.239.

51. ibid., pp.203-4.

52. ibid., p.244. The Platform of the Ten based its position in the trade union debate on a draft decree submitted to the X party congress and signed by Lenin, Artem (Sergeev), Kalinin, Kamenev, Lozovskii, Petrovskii, Rudzutak, Stalin, Tomskii and Zinoviev, published in P, 18 February 1921; X s"ezd RKP, pp.663-74.

53. Liebman, pp.297-8.

demagogic.<sup>54</sup> By the end of January the theme of the dangers of factional struggle had become dominant: 'Any disagreement, even the most petty, can become politically dangerous if there is a chance of it growing into a split'.<sup>55</sup>

b. The debate in Moscow

At the February 1921 guberniya party conference Minkov characterised the MK in this period as composed of 'several small groups, and over every question we were forced to do more talking than acting'.<sup>56</sup> The MK first fractured on the shoals of the trade union debate at its meeting of 1 January 1921<sup>57</sup> when the Ten emerged with a clear majority over the combined oppositions.<sup>58</sup> On the basis of this vote the MK hoped to direct the course of debate in Moscow. At its 3 January meeting the MK discussed the forms that the pre- X congress discussion should take in the city. The Ignatovtsy supported Saprnov's argument that 'there is no need to shield the party member' and insisted on unlimited debate. The Ignatov group also opposed limits to the number of co-rapporteurs.<sup>59</sup> Despite these objections the MK

54. 'Krizis partii', 19 January 1921, Lenin PSS, vol.42, p.242.

55. 'Eshche raz o profsoyuzakh', 25 January 1921, Lenin PSS, vol. 42, p.269.

56. Moskovskie bol'sheviki v bor'be s pravym i 'levym' opportunistom, M. 1969, p.28.

57. At the end of December 1920 Artem, MK secretary, had been transferred to other work and his place taken by V.N. Yakovleva, a supporter of the buffer group.

58. In the first vote Lenin received 19 votes, Trotsky 7, Bukharin 4, the DCs 4, Ignatov 3, Shlyapnikov 1; in the second ballot Lenin's position was adopted by 22 votes to 14, Otchet MK za yanvar' 1921g., p.3. For the sake of brevity the various positions will be cited by the name of their leading figure.

59. V.F. Kochegarov, 'Bor'ba bol'shevikov Moskovskoi gubernii za

adopted a plan whereby debate would open after a city conference on 10 January of activists. The speakers at the meeting would be appointed by the MK and their theses checked beforehand. After the conference the MK would announce its view and debate would then open in the raions.<sup>60</sup>

The hopes for such an ordered debate were shattered by the Petrograd party organisation's 'address to the party'. The Petrograd organisation was one of the first to support Lenin's TU position, reflecting Zinoviev's hostility to Trotsky, and on 2 January, ratified by a city conference on 6 January, the PK decided to send an address to the party on the question.<sup>61</sup> It condemned Trotsky's 'mistaken theses' which 'could lead to a split between the party and the trade unions' and called for proportional representation in the elections to the X congress according to the strength of each view.<sup>62</sup> The address aroused a storm of protest in Moscow and at the 10 January MK session the oppositions united to condemn it, and succeeded in having a special MK session convened on 11 January to discuss the issue. The 10 January meeting with 15 MK members absent, decided to forbid the printing of the address in the Moscow press and Pravda<sup>63</sup> as it would pre-empt the discussion in Moscow.

That same evening (10 January) the special meeting of party

pobedu leninskoi platformy vo vremya profsyuznoi diskussii v partii (1920-1921gg.)', MGPI im. V.I. Lenina, 1967, p.137.

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60. ibid., p.138.

61. P, 13 January 1921.

62. KT, 13 January 1921; Petrogradskaya pravda, 5-6 January 1921.

63. Kochegarov (1967), p.139.

activists called earlier by the MK took place. Trotsky criticised the Leninist position and defended his own, while Bukharin presented his own theses.<sup>64</sup> The chairman of the MGSPS, Lozovskii, defended the Leninist position in his capacity of co-rapporteur. He stressed the need for unions as the educators of masses so that, as he put it shortly afterwards, 'even the most backward worker... would implement communist slogans'.<sup>65</sup>

At the 11 January meeting of the MK bureau and at the MK plenum that followed, the oppositions joined forces to censure the Petrograd address. Trotsky and Zinoviev took part in the lively discussion, and the bureau by a majority of one accepted the Leninist proposal to postpone discussion of the address until the MK had discussed the trade union question, the essence of the address. At the MK meeting the DCs insisted that the debate should not be restricted to the MK but should begin with the raions and in every cell and only then move to the MK. The majority on the MK rejected this idea and were keen to hide the depth of the disagreements from the population and abroad, and were unwilling to unleash an uncontrolled debate which could threaten the party's ability to act. The resolution called on the TsK to take control of the pre-congress discussion and to make available all the materials. Only in this way, the resolution argued, would the Petrograd address be deprived of its 'extremely dangerous aspect, the tendency of the Petrograd party organisation to transform itself into a special centre for preparing the party congress'.<sup>66</sup> The Petrograd organisation had indeed hoped to circumvent the

64. Kochegarov (1967), p.140.

65. A. Lozovskii, Zadachi professional'nykh soyuzov, M. 1921, p.9.

paralysed TsK and to impose its views on the party. Such an attempt was bound to arouse Moscow's anger in which political considerations were reinforced by the traditional jealousy between the two cities.

The oppositions registered their greatest success at the MK plenum meeting in the evening of 11 January. The issue was not so much the trade union question as the address itself. A bloc formed, with the exception of Ignatov's group which argued, independent as usual, that the Petrograd organisation had a perfect right to put forward proposals for the conduct of the debate,<sup>67</sup> and a motion was passed by a majority of one vote censuring the Petrograd address. It had taken the address to forge such an alliance since, for example, Sapronov had explicitly condemned the rise to dominance of the trade union question when, he insisted, party and soviet construction were the key issues.

The TsK plenum the next day (12 January) sharply criticised the MK for its decision. On his return to Moscow on 13 January Artem wrote a letter absolving himself of all responsibility for the position adopted and accused the majority of having steamrollered the resolution through without waiting to consult

66. KT, 13 January 1921; X s"ezd RKP, pp. 832-4.

67. Out of the 28 attending, 18 spoke, and Trotsky three times. In the first round of voting neither the DCs or the buffer group could obtain a majority for motions censuring the Petrograd address:

Sapronov	3	votes for,	18	against,	4	abstentions
Yakovleva	8	"	13	"	6	"
Ignatov	3	"	21	"	2	"
Trotsky	16	"	10	"	1	"

In the second round Trotsky's motion, a combination of the first two, was passed by 14 votes to 13, with one crucial abstention, KT, 15 January 1921; Lenin PSS, vol.42, pp.239-40.

the 11 missing members of the MK.<sup>68</sup> The TsK resolution called the MK decision an 'unprincipled and brazen bureaucratic perversion of democratic centralism'.<sup>69</sup> Trotsky and the buffer group by one vote succeeded in defeating a motion in the MK bureau meeting of 13 January to support the TsK resolution.<sup>70</sup> The response of the TsK to the MK's resolution aggravated the already tense relations in the bureau and provoked the MK to yet another bout of in-fighting.<sup>71</sup>

The MK finally determined its position on the trade union question at an extended session, meeting with representatives of the raions and uezdy, on 17-18 January 1921. The debate in Moscow can be seen as the fulcrum of the discussion in the country, and at this meeting eight platforms were represented. After a two-day debate a series of votes reversed the MK resolution of 11 January.<sup>72</sup> On that day (18 January) the MK called on the Moscow party to support the Leninist platform and, while allowing free discussion, insisted that the unity of the

68. Artem (F.A. Sergeev), Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma, M. 1983, pp.287-8.

69. Rodionova, p.19.

70. Kochegarov, 1967, p.144.

71. Otchet MK za yanvar' 1920g., p.3.

72. At the end of the debate the MK bureau insisted on three-fold voting: first, voting of MK members on each of the 8 platforms; then MK members to vote by name for the two platforms gaining the most votes in the previous round; and finally, secret voting of all present on all platforms. In the first round the following picture emerged out of the 37 votes cast: Lenin 19, Trotsky 7, Bukharin 4, Saprionov 4, Ignatov 3, and Shlyapnikov, Nogin and Ryazanov with no votes. In the second round of open voting out of 31 votes cast for the two leading platforms Lenin's received 22 and Trotsky's 9. In the third round with all 91 activists voting Lenin received 57, Trotsky 20, Saprionov 7, Shlyapnikov 4, Ignatov 2, Bukharin 1, and none for Nogin and Ryazanov. A general vote for the two main platforms gave Lenin 62 and Trotsky 18, KT, 19 January 1921; P, 19 January 1921.



party was to remain 'inviolable'.<sup>73</sup> To ensure a clear Leninist majority the MK bureau was re-elected at the MK plenum of 25 January 1921.<sup>74</sup>

Discussion in the raions over the trade unions took place concurrently with the debates in the MK. The Workers' Opposition retained their support in Baumanskii raion, as did Ignatov in Gorodskoi raion, and this summed up the extent of their dominance over the raion party organisations. Trotsky's platform was supported in Sokol'nicheskii and Zamoskvoretskii raions. By the time of the February guberniya conference, however, the Leninists had achieved victories on the trade union issue in all raions.

In Baumanskii raion the Leninists tried to use the TU issue to wrest control from the Workers' Opposition majority on the RK.<sup>75</sup> On the eve of a delegate meeting of 13 January 1921 the old RK held a meeting to coordinate its assault, and therefore committed precisely the same offence as the Workers' Opposition had done in August 1920, though on this occasion no action was taken against the fractionalists.<sup>76</sup> The delegate meeting discussed the trade unions, with the key speeches by Lozovskii, Trotsky, and Medvedev, followed by a lively discussion but no

73. KT, 19 January 1921.

74. Dorofeev, Minkov and Sorin lost their seats, and Krinitskii, Uryvaev and Zelenskii, loyal Leninists, and Yakovleva, a Trotsky-Bukharin supporter, joined (Appendix 14).

75. At the time the RPO consisted of 1740 members and 465 candidates, with the largest cells among the students at the various colleges in the raion (P, 18 January 1921). At this time Shlyapnikov, chairman of the metalworkers' TU, and I.I. Kutuzov, chairman of the textileworkers' TU, were active in the raion but are not reported as having addressed meetings.

76. Manievich, p.176.

voting.<sup>77</sup> The opposition narrowly fought off a motion of no confidence in the RK at a delegate meeting on 5 February by 47 votes to 43. After this failure the Leninists demonstratively stormed out of the meeting.<sup>78</sup> A delegate meeting on 18 February finally voted on the basic issues of the TU debate. The Leninist platform received 73 votes, Trotsky 10, and Shlyapnikov only 3. The RK, however, was able to resist the demands for new elections to the RK on the justified grounds that elections had only recently taken place.<sup>79</sup>

The Gorodskoi raion on 11 January 1921 unanimously adopted Ignatov's TU position. A further resolution accepted the substance of the Petrograd address, and called for elections to the forthcoming party congress to be based on proportionality.<sup>80</sup>

Sokol'nicheskii raion, with over 3000 party members, was the main stronghold of Trotsky's position. The transport workers in the wagon repair plant, the huge tram park, and the railway workshops had become familiar with Trotsky's presence through the Tsektran experiment. Already at the end of November 1920 The RK had supported Trotsky's TU platform with only one dissenter (Lyudvinskaya).<sup>81</sup> Trotsky's support in the raion was confirmed

77. loc.cit. The Workers' Opposition retained control of the RK in elections held on 15 January 1921. Its members included Baranov, Demidov, Kutuzov, Korzinov, Kuranova, Kryukov, Maslennikov, Tulyakov, and Sovetov.

78. The Leninists were led by Kulikov, later a member of the TsK VKP(b) and secretary of Zamoskvoretskii RK, Manievich, p.177.

79. Manievich, p.177. The opposition retained control of the raion until 27 November 1921, and the raion became a centre of opposition to the NEP.

80. KT, 15 January 1921.

81. Sokol'niki, p.129. The victory of the Trotskyists was

by a vote of the RK on 15 January 1921.<sup>82</sup> The Leninists now launched a vigorous counter-attack by sending in such speakers as Artem and Skvortsov-Stepanov, and Lenin personally called in the leading oppositionists to the Kremlin to convince them of the correctness of his position.<sup>83</sup> Under such pressure the 22 January delegate meeting, despite Trotsky's oratory, finally voted in favour of Lenin's platform. This defeat, coming on the heels of the general city discussion meeting on 21 January which saw Trotsky's platform receive a bare fifth of the total votes cast,<sup>84</sup> may well have prompted Trotsky to reconsider his position.

At an extended session of the Zamoskvoretskii RK on 23 January, with about 200 activists present, Trotsky attended as the main speaker, with Zinoviev and Kamenev as co-rapporteurs, and Medvedev and Bubnov defending their respective positions for the Workers' Opposition and the DCs. Trotsky withdrew his own platform and declared a merger with the buffer group on the basis of a platform promising workers' democracy; communist influence to be assured in the unions by educational methods and not by appointment; for the unions to concentrate on production tasks by merging with economic bodies, though each to retain their

confirmed by elections to the RK where they obtained a majority led by Kotov. After the X congress he became a staunch supporter of Lenin and continued to head the raion to 1925, Yu.O.K., p.20.

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82. Mosk. bol'sheviki v bor'be, p.24.

83. T.F. Lyudvinskaya, Nas Leninskaya partiya vela, M. 1976, p.188.

84. Izvestiya VTsIK, 29 January 1921.

identity; and a healthy internal life in the unions to be guaranteed by sending competent party workers to them. The voting gave Trotsky's new platform a majority in the RK, but not among the activists.<sup>85</sup> After this meeting the TU question was opened to general party debate in the raion. Support for the Leninist platform was confirmed when over a thousand communists met a few days later at a delegate meeting.<sup>86</sup>

Further defeats followed. A general meeting in Krasnopresnenskii raion of all 4000 communists on 24 January gave Lenin's platform 3847 votes, 50 for Trotsky's platform, and a bare few votes for the DCs and Ignatov.<sup>87</sup> A delegate meeting on 17 February in that raion gave Lenin's platform strong support with 101 votes, while Trotsky only received 7, and the Workers' Opposition 5 votes.<sup>88</sup> As in the party debate, this raion proved to be strongly in favour of the official view. A similar defeat took place at the delegate meeting of Rogozhsko-Simonovskii raion on 27 January. Sokol'nikov defended Trotsky's platform, while Ignatov and Tomskii presented their cases. After a heated discussion 232 voted for Lenin, 18 for Trotsky, 5 for Ignatov,

85. Voting was as follows:

	Trotsky	Kamenev	Medvedev	Bubnov
RK members	7	5	0	0
Cell delegates	50	82	6	5
Party members	74	131	5	5

KT, 25 January 1921; P, 26 January 1921.

86. Lozovskii, Andreev, and Shlyapnikov addressed the audience of a thousand. 31 delegates and 256 observers voted for Lenin; 10 delegates and 101 observers for Trotsky; and 10 delegates and 132 observers for Shlyapnikov, KT, 10 February 1921.

87. P, 26 January 1921. 88. KT, 19 February 1921.

and 2 for the others.<sup>89</sup> In the RKs as a whole in January 1921 the oppositions together were supported by nearly half of the RK members:

Table 23

Results of the TU discussion in Moscow RKs in January 1921

Raion committee	Votes cast						Total
	Lenin	Trotsky	Shlyap.	Ignatov	DCs	Abstent.	
Gor	1	2	2	9	0	0	14
Zam	5	7	0	0	0	0	12
Kham	6	3	1	0	1	0	11
R-Sim	11	3	0	0	0	0	14
K-Pres	11	4	0	0	1	0	16
Baum	14	1	0	0	0	0	15
Sok	2	8	0	0	0	1	11
Total	50	28	3	9	2	1	93

Source: P, 2 February 1921.

By the eve of the February guberniya conference, therefore, the Leninists had achieved victories in all the RPOs on the trade union question, but only after a severe struggle.

In other organisations the Leninists also achieved majorities. A broad meeting of the MGSPS and other Moscow trade union leaders at the end of January 1921 supported Lozovskii's Leninist TU platform, but insisted on real reforms within the terms of this approach in production and management, and to this end a commission of seven was formed.<sup>90</sup> The communist cells in the Sverdlov University on 26 January gave the Trotsky-Bukharin platform 115 votes, the Workers' Opposition 91, and all the rest of the 1200 votes went to the Platform of the Ten.<sup>91</sup> In the

89. P, 29 January 1921.

90. KT, 2 February 1921.

91. KT, 29 January 1921.

Tsektran cell itself Trotsky lost his support on 27 January when Vompe's defence of the Leninist platform received the support of 33 members, while Trotsky's views presented by Bumazhnyi gained only 4, with 4 abstentions.<sup>92</sup> The vote was closer in the communist fraction of the food union when 26 supported Ignatov to Lenin's 32.<sup>93</sup> In the uezdy of Moscow guberniya the Leninists achieved victories, but met with the stiffest resistance in the Kolomna and Serpukhov organisations. Support for the oppositions in the MPO may have been greater since their victories were not always reported in the press, but the general tendency for support to shift to the Leninist platform is clear.

The I Moscow metalworkers' conference (2-4 February 1921), which as mentioned was the scene of bitter protest, discussed the union issue. The discussion following Lozovskii's speech characterised the unions as 'worth little', weak, and isolated from the masses. Speakers were unanimous that the unions had to strengthen themselves and set about the task of organising production. The Menshevik and SR views, as we have seen, gained significant support.<sup>94</sup> A wide-ranging resolution was passed calling for strictly observed democratic elections to all union organs, with freedom of speech and meeting; greater elected control over factory management and no representative to be sent to them by any organisation (including the party) with voting powers unless they had been elected by a general meeting of

92. KT, 29 January 1921.

93. KT, 10 February 1921.

94. KT, 8 February 1921. The metalworkers' union (VSRM) TsK met at this time and by 11 votes to 9 supported Shlyapnikov's theses, Gurevich received 7, while the Leninist platform only 2, KT, 15 February 1921.

workers and then confirmed by the union. The resolution insisted on the free movement of labour from one factory to another.<sup>95</sup> The mood of the conference was more radical even than Shlyapnikov's programme, and reflected the strong current of protest amongst the Moscow working class against the policies of war communism.

The guberniya party conference (19-21 February 1921) reviewed the course of the trade union discussion in Moscow. Discussion was curtailed on the grounds that all were aware of the main positions. Short speeches were made by Kamenev; Bukharin, on behalf of the joint platform with Trotsky, insisted that the new position differed significantly from the first variants of Trotsky's platform, and obligatory union candidature to economic organs remained as part of the new platform; and Kiselev for the Workers' Opposition. Ignatov caused the greatest shock when he announced that his group, hitherto tending towards the Leninist platform now agreed with the main propositions of the Workers' Opposition. In the voting out of 367 delegates 217 voted for the Ten, 52 for the Trotsky-Bukharin platform, 45 for the Workers' Opposition, and only 13 for the Democratic Centralists.<sup>96</sup> This was to be the last Moscow party conference in which the oppositionists were able to muster significant support and to argue their cases with impunity.

95. KT, 15, 27 February 1921.

96. V. Mosk. gubpartkonf., p.5; P, 25 February 1921; KT, 19, 21 February 1921.

### 3. The party debate: second phase

Following the November guberniya party conference the party debate receded into the background as the Moscow party organisation turned its attention to organisational questions and the trade union debate. At the beginning of 1921, however, the issue of reform in the party re-emerged with full force as the various positions presented their platforms and sought support in the prelude to the X party congress. All groups realised that fundamental decisions would be taken at this congress. In Moscow the debate was directed towards achieving the maximum support at the guberniya party conference, which was held between 19-21 February 1921, and where the position of the MPO at the X congress would be determined and its delegates chosen.

#### a. The platforms

At the MK plenum of 11 January 1921, which as we have seen was dominated by the union issue, Yakovleva proposed that the pre-congress discussion on the party in Moscow should be within the terms of a set of theses drafted by the MK bureau. Discussion was then to take place in the MK, the cell bureaux, and with APWs, and only then would discussion move to the raions. Kamenev, Saprionov and Yakovleva were entrusted with drafting the theses,<sup>97</sup> and it was clearly hoped that by including these representatives of three major tendencies, although the Workers' Opposition was not represented, the theses would be acceptable to a broad range of opinion.

In drafting the theses the three were still working on the

97. KT, 15 January 1921.



assumption that the basic aspects of war communism were to continue and the theses were therefore more guarded than the actual resolution adopted at the X congress on party building<sup>98</sup> in calling for the application of 'workers' democracy', the slogan of the moderate reformers. As the MK draft resolution, issued on 9 February, stated:

The achievement of a breathing space by the heroic military efforts of the party provides the real possibility of introducing the elements of workers' democracy, but not for a minute forgetting, however, that all methods of party work are always<sup>99</sup> subordinate to the demands of revolutionary expediency.

Nevertheless, the MK theses, or draft resolution, remained in the spirit of the reforming IX party conference in analysing the party's ills and in proposing the remedies. The theses attacked the bureaucratisation of the leading strata in the party, the lack of effective links between them and the rest of the party and hence the division between the verkhi and the nizy, the intelligentsia and the workers. On the basis of these divisions, they argued, 'syndicalism' had developed, (i.e., the lack of faith in the party as expressing the interests of the working class), above all amongst the new recruits whose education had been neglected. The MK now unequivocally argued that the main task was to improve the quality and level of those already in the party rather than continuing expansion. This theme was accepted by the X congress and resulted in the 1921 purge. The MK repeated the general measures adopted by the IX conference: equality in the party, wide discussion, extended electability, and so on. A key point was the insistence that the cells were to

98. X s"ezd RKP, pp.559-71.

99. KT, 9 February 1921.

restrict themselves to education and agitation, and not to take on the functions of organs of power, which, according to the theses, led to a breach between them and the masses. Petty party tutelage over TUs and soviets was to be 'decisively' ended, and the regular transfer of party members between soviet and party work was to ensure a decline in bureaucratism.<sup>100</sup> While reforming, these theses allowed little scope for the independence of the party member, and by insisting on the limited role for the cells once again emphasised the split between an active and politically passive membership.

The other groups also formulated their positions in the form of theses towards the X party congress. Foremost amongst these were those issued by the group of 'active workers of Moscow's raions', the Ignatovtsy. Stimulated by their developing alliance with the Workers' Opposition their theses provided a powerful critique of current practices in the party.<sup>101</sup> The theses concentrated on the role of the rank and file party member and insisted that with the ending of the war new methods should be adopted:

The transfer of military methods of management into the daily practice of party-soviet and trade union work deprived the party masses of active participation and led to the isolation of the party verkhi from its proletarian nizy, and provided the basis for the increased bureaucratisation of party and state apparatuses.

100. KT, 9 February 1921.

101. The theses were signed by E.N. Ignatov, G. Lebedev, M. Burovtsev, I. Maslov, A. Orekhov, Denisov, Kh. Semenovich, I. Abin, and Berdzin of Gorodskoi raion, G. Korzinov, Kryukov, E. Kuranova, and N. Tulyakov of Baumanskii raion, K. Radzevilov and S. Smirnov of Rogozhsko-Simonovskii raion, and V. Linkevich, I. Stefashkin and I. Vasil'ev of Sokol'nicheskii raion, KT, 12, 13, 15 February 1921; P, 12 February 1921.

The party nizy were dissatisfied with the comparatively small role that they had been assigned, the theses went on, and the growth in their consciousness now demanded changes which had been blocked, despite the reforming resolutions of the past few months, by the bureaucratic habits of the leading party workers in all apparatuses. The party crisis was characterised as follows:

The stagnation of the development of the organisational forms of party building towards their greater democratisation has led to what we call the party crisis. In essence this is the disparity between outmoded party forms with the demands, dictated by class instinct and the growing consciousness, of the proletariat and the party masses in their desire to create new forms of communist society.

While Lenin and his supporters saw only a 'declassed' proletariat the Ignatovtsy saw a proletariat growing in consciousness and able to take hold of its own destiny. In this analysis we encounter for the first time a phenomenon that Rudolf Bahro was later to call 'surplus consciousness'.<sup>102</sup> This is essentially the contradiction between frozen organisational forms (bureaucratism), and the striving of groups and individuals for a more active and responsible participation in the party and political processes. This comes up against the opposition of the entrenched cadres, the Ignatovtsy stated. They proposed a wide range of reforms designed to advance workers, broaden decision-making, and above all to increase the role of the cells. In these demands they insisted that the principles of 'workers'

102. Rudolf Bahro, The Alternative in Eastern Europe, NLB 1978, (trans David Fernbach), pp.256-7, and passim. Bahro defines surplus consciousness as 'an energetic mental capacity that is no longer absorbed by the immediate necessities and dangers of human existence and can thus orient itself to more distant problems', p.257.

democracy' were to be applied 'even if the internal or external situation worsens', and were thus no longer willing to make reforms dependent on circumstances, as the MK had been.<sup>103</sup>

The Ignatov group had therefore moved from a position broadly in line with the Democratic Centralist critique of party structures and with the Platform of the Ten's emphasis on the educational role of the unions to one where rank and file party members and ordinary workers were to play an active and autonomous role in political life. Hence their switch at the February guberniya party conference in support of the Workers' Opposition.<sup>104</sup> By insisting that the split in the party between verkhi and nizy was also a social one between workers and intelligentsia the Ignatovtsy were open to the charge of Makhaevism, and indeed were accused of this in Pravda on the eve of the February conference.<sup>105</sup>

Shlyapnikov's own criticisms of the party centres were very

103. Among their specific proposals the Ignatov theses called for an end to recruitment to the party of bourgeois people (except for those who had been in the underground movement); a reregistration of all non-workers or peasants who had joined since 1 January 1919; guaranteed free discussion for all opinions in the party; two-third worker representation on all party committees; and for representatives of all main currents in the party to be drafted into the party's leading bodies, KT, 12 February 1921.

104. Some of the Ignatovtsy continued their radical critique of the Leninist party and state structures beyond the X party congress and participated in the Panushkin 'Workers' and Peasants' Socialist Party', destroyed in summer 1921, G. Myasnikov's Workers' Group, inspired by the Workers' Opposition, and the Workers' Truth group, inspired by Alexander Bogdanov.

105. P, 16 February 1921. Wacław Machajski (A. Vol'skii) had argued in The Intellectual Worker, Geneva 1904, and elsewhere, that the intelligentsia was 'a parasitic class exploiting the workers through their monopoly of specialised knowledge' (Rigby, p.93), and that the October revolution had been 'a counter-revolution of the intellectuals', Avrich, Russian Anarchists, p.200.

similar to those of the Ignatov group, and he acknowledged his debt to the raion party workers of Moscow in providing the substance for his critique published in the first issue of the discussion paper promised by the IX party conference.<sup>106</sup> He argued that the IX conference had not tackled the roots of the party crisis but the party had only 'mechanically' tried to gloss over difficulties by holding open meetings and so on. To solve the crisis, he insisted, every party member should be allowed to 'find his tongue, as they say in the raions', and participate in the debate. Instead, he argued, 'comradely' relations had been replaced by 'orders and obedience' (prikazanie i poslushanie):

The party, as the managing and creative collective, has turned into a sordid bureaucratic machine. The party work of the masses has been reduced to the fulfilment of a few very basic duties such as subbotniks, guard duty, patrols, and so on.<sup>107</sup>

He supported his plea for an end to bureaucratic and mechanical methods in the party, for the greater activity of the party masses, by the events in the Moscow party organisation:

The members of the Moscow party organisation expressed a lack of confidence in the work of the MK. This... encountered a hostile reception... The modest wish of the members of the Moscow party organisation to elect a new MK, responsive to the demands and needs of the party masses, prompted the rebuff and interference of the TsK RKP(b).

He was here referring to the Baumanskii incident and the November guberniya party conference. He then made his often quoted claim of chicanery on the part of the centre:

This interference revealed itself in a whole system of pressure and struggle against comrades who were

106. A.Shlyapnikov, 'O nashikh vnutripartiinykh raznoglasiyakh', Diskussionnyi listok, TsK RKP(b), 1, yanvar' 1921g., p.13.

107. ibid., p.14.

dissatisfied with the work of the MK. In those raions where the opposition was in a majority they insisted on the distribution of delegates proportional to the number of votes received. There, where the majority were supporters of the old MK, proportionality was not allowed.<sup>108</sup>

At the November conference itself Lenin had argued that while proportionality was necessary in selecting delegates to the conference, implying that this unusual procedure had been applied by the Leninists before the conference, it was absolutely inadmissible in electing a leading body such as the MK.<sup>109</sup> Shlyapnikov's charges can neither be proved or disproved, but they reveal the increasing tendency for both the Workers' Opposition and the Leninists to deal with the minutiae of the debate itself and not the main issues.

The Democratic Centralists reduced the difficulties in the party to the problem of the transition from military to economic tasks. They called for strictly defined structures from top to bottom on the basis of democratic centralism (i.e., as they put it, pyramids instead of pillars). As opposed to the Ignatovtsy, they identified a fall in the consciousness of the masses, though concurred in noting a decline in internal party democracy, which they agreed could be halted by making the cell the locus of party life.<sup>110</sup> While Saprionov openly identified himself with the Moscow opposition which had emerged since the November conference,<sup>111</sup> Osinskii was more hostile. Referring to the

108. ibid., p.14.

109. Lenin PSS, vol. 42, p.39.

110. The Democratic Centralist theses were published in P, 22 January 1921, signed by A. Bubnov, T. Boguslavskii, A. Kamenskii, V.N. Maksimovskii, V. Osinskii, Rafail, and Saprionov, in X s"ezd RKP, pp.656-62.

111. Myasnikov, pp.295-6.

misquotation of an earlier speech (delivered in Tula in May 1920) he made a blunt attack on the Workers' Opposition in February 1921. All talk of the self-activity of the masses under the circumstances, he argued, was nonsense. All that could be done at present was to involve them in 'active work' under the guidance of the party.<sup>112</sup> This split between Saprnov and Osinskii marked the end of the DCs as a coherent tendency. An aura of bureaucratic paternalism and not radical worker politics had long clung to their reform proposals, and the present debate forced them to choose between effective reform or bureaucratic consolidation.

b. The debate

On the basis of these platforms on the party question battle was now joined in the raions of Moscow. The debate took place against a background of strikes and demonstrations in the city and peasant uprisings in the countryside, which inevitably tended to enhance support for the MK as the party united in the face of difficulties. Despite sizeable support the Ignatov platform, now carrying the standard for the Workers' Opposition, and the Democratic Centralists were defeated in most raions.

At an extended session of the Zamoskvorech'e RK on 11 February, with about 150 communists attending, Yakovleva, still the MK secretary, defended the MK theses, Bubnov those of the DCs, and Burovtsev the Ignatov position. A lively discussion was followed by victory for the DCs.<sup>113</sup> On the same day a delegate

112. KT, 20 February 1921.

113. 8 RK members and 52 cell representatives voted for the DC

meeting with raion activists in Sokol'nicheskii raion gave the MK theses 98 votes and Ignatov's 79.<sup>114</sup> In Rogozhsko-Simonovskii raion a delegate meeting gave the MK theses, defended by Yakovleva, 30 votes, while Ignatov defending his own position received only two votes.<sup>115</sup> Yakovleva's presence as the defender of the MK line in the party debate, while a supporter of the Trotsky-Bukharin platform in the TU debate, illustrates the highly confused situation facing the party member in voting on the various platforms. It does show, however, that the Trotsky-Bukharin supporters on the TU question were consistent opponents of radical reform of the party.

The division between various opposition platforms occasionally allowed the MK victory by default. A general meeting of two wards in Gorodskoi raion, for example, gave the MK 280 votes, the DCs 277, and Ignatov 197.<sup>116</sup> A delegate meeting on the eve of the guberniya conference in that raion indicated that the Ignatovtsy were losing their old predominance when the MK theses received 87 votes, Ignatov's 53, and the DCs 13.<sup>117</sup> In Baumanskii raion the Workers' Opposition was also losing ground. A general meeting on 17 February gave the MK theses 64 votes to Ignatov's 17,<sup>118</sup> while a delegate meeting the next day supported the MK with 51 votes, 38 supported the Workers' Opposition (RK),

theses; 2 and 31, respectively, for the MK, and 3 and 36 for Ignatov, KT, 13 February 1921.

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114. KT, 13 February 1921.

115. KT, 18 February 1921.

116. KT, 16 February 1921.

117. KT, 19 February 1921.

118. loc.cit.



and 2 for the DCs. This meeting also voted to support Lenin's TU platform, but the opposition succeeded by 46 to 45 votes in having the delegates to the guberniya conference elected proportionately to the more favourable party building vote.<sup>119</sup> As usual, the greatest support for the MK was mustered in Krasnopresnenskii raion,<sup>120</sup> while Sokol'nicheskii raion on 18 February saw the MK crush the Ignatov group by 65 votes to 8.<sup>121</sup> On the same day a delegate meeting in Zamoskvorech'e saw the MK snatch a victory with 41 votes against 20 for the Ignatov group and 18 for the DCs.<sup>122</sup> In the majority of raions, delegates to the conference were elected proportionately to the voting on the TU issue.

c. The Moscow guberniya party conference (19-21 February 1921)

At the conference, attended by 367 delegates, Radek reported on the political moment. He was pessimistic about the prospects for a prolonged peace or the expansion of the revolution to other countries. Therefore, he argued, 'we must temporarily rely on our own resources', and the main prospect of this was the establishment of 'correct' relations with the 80 million peasants in the country:

We have always said that we need the help of the international revolution, but the international revolution cannot get by without us since we are the world bulwark holding back the attack of capital.

119. Manievich, p.177; P, 20 February 1921.

120. A delegate meeting on 16 February gave Kamenev 129 votes, Bubnov and Rafail for the DCs 2 votes, and 3 votes for Litvinov on behalf of the Workers' Opposition (KT, 19 February 1921). A delegate meeting on 13 January 1921 had returned a strongly Leninist RK, KT, 15 January 1921.

121. KT, 19 February 1921.      122. loc.cit.

Securing the revolution in Russia was now the key to world revolution, he implied, and on this basis he insisted that a massive expansion of the party should take place by attracting millions of workers:

We are the only force which can restructure the world, and we must have a firm belief that ~~the~~ working class will be able to cope with this task.<sup>123</sup>

The failure of the world revolution, the problem of the peasantry, and the centrality of the party, these were to be the central issues underlying the debate at the conference.

Three reports were presented on the question of party building. Kamenev on behalf of the MK outlined the programme of workers' democracy, which he argued could tackle the three main complaints of the masses: the role of the specialists, inner-party inequality, and bureaucratism. He ridiculed Ignatov's proposal that the party's leading bodies should consist of two-thirds workers, and at the same time he attacked the DC idea of introducing 'independent' people into the TsK.<sup>124</sup> The MK resolution, discussed above, was put forward as the conference resolution and called for a blend of reform and organisational improvement to tackle the party's problems.<sup>125</sup>

Ignatov accused the party leadership of having transformed itself into a group of specialists and once again insisted that the cells should be the focus of party life, and claimed that the MK had adopted the idea without acknowledgement to his group. Here Ignatov was claiming proprietorship over a fairly basic idea. He continued his crusade against the alleged petty-

123. V Mosk. gubpartkonf., p.4; KT, 22 February 1921.

124. V Mosk. gubpartkonf., p.6.                      125. ibid., pp.7-17.

bourgeois infiltration of the party by proposing that all those other than workers or peasants who had joined before 1 January 1919 should be expelled. Ignatov declared that his group was dropping the demand for two-thirds worker representation. The third report was presented by Bubnov and he once again made the DC claim of the continuity of the crisis in the party since early 1919, and attacked both the incorrect policies of the TsK and the danger represented by the Workers' Opposition. The voting gave the MK resolution 251, Ignatov 57, and Bubnov 30.<sup>126</sup>

In the discussion on the MK's report since November 1920 several speakers deplored the harmful effects of the TU discussion on the attempts to implement organisational reform in the MPO. Yakovleva, in the main report on the question, argued that the change of 3 MK secretaries in as many months had been particularly aggravating. She stated that there was still no uniform structure to the RKs nor a single plan of work in the whole organisation.<sup>127</sup> Uryvaev's resolution accepting the MK report aroused less controversy than the similar report at the November conference, and indeed the idea of a compromise composite MK implemented at that conference was attacked. By a large majority with 230 votes this resolution was adopted while Burovtsev's on behalf of the Ignatov group and the Workers' Opposition obtained 46, and Bubnov's only 38.<sup>128</sup>

The most heated discussion took place over the elections to the MK. Bubnov argued that they should be delayed until a month

126. ibid., p.7; P, 22 February 1921.

127. P, 22 February 1921; KT, 22 February 1921.

128. V Mosk. gubpartkonf., pp.34-6; KT, 22 February 1921.

after the X congress to allow sufficient time to introduce 'workers' democracy'. Burovtsev's resolution agreed with the Leninist majority that the MK elected in November had been composed of conflicting groups and had therefore failed to provide leadership, but also called for a delay in electing a new MK. All agreed that it had been a mistake to elect the MK on the basis of TU platforms and not over party construction. By a majority of 206 to 103 with 18 abstentions a motion in favour of electing the MK at the conference was accepted. A second named vote gave 216 for, 88 against, and 24 abstentions. Thereupon the Ignatov group declared that they would not participate in the elections. 220 voted for the list prepared by the MK, 43 abstained, and 42 refused to take part in the voting.<sup>129</sup> Ignatov, Korzinov, and Sapronov lost their seats on the MK (Appendix 14).

Elections to the X party congress took place on the basis of trade union platforms: the Platform of the Ten received 28 places, the Trotsky-Bukharin group and the Workers' Opposition 6 each, and the DCs 2.<sup>130</sup> The majority of the MK were once again Leninists. The oppositions contested the legality of the election and complained to the TsK. Lenin gave their complaints short shrift at a meeting with Moscow party activists on 24 February 1921, arguing that 'the system of two rooms (a reference to the November conference) can no longer be tolerated... What sort of democracy is it if the conference cannot elect the

129. V Mosk. gubpartkonf., pp.39, 41.

130. ibid., p.41.

131. Lenin PSS, vol.42, p.350.

MK?'.<sup>131</sup> The TsK report at the X congress noted the change in the relative strength of the major positions since November 1920. In the first about two-fifths of the delegates supported the oppositions, and in February 1921 only about one-sixth.<sup>132</sup> In an announcement to all party members soon after the new MK gave notice of the new style of leadership: 'All hail to the united, powerful organisation of Moscow communists under the leadership of its renewed centre'.<sup>133</sup>

Against the background of the disturbances the MK outlined measures to improve its apparatus, and to improve contacts with local party organisations and over such organisations as Komsomol.<sup>134</sup> All the apparatuses of the MK and the RKs were to be standardised.<sup>135</sup> During the transition to NEP this programme of organisational consolidation was implemented in what was called a perestroika, borrowing the term from the shift in the economy but tending in precisely the opposite direction; towards greater centralisation rather than liberalisation. The same issue carried denunciations of 'counter-revolutionary' agitation in Kronstadt and elsewhere, and called on all to unite around the soviets. Following the X congress the MK launched a campaign for the 'workerising' of soviet organs<sup>136</sup> and under the slogan 'to the masses' argued that the 'counter-revolutionary wavering' of the non-party masses was to be countered by intensifying party unity.<sup>137</sup> This was to be the slogan of the NEP.

132. X s"ezd RKP, p.803.

133. KT, 24 February 1921.

134. KT, 3 March 1921.

135. KT, 4 March 1921.

136. KT, 25 March 1921.

137. KT, 27 March 1921.

4. The debates in perspective and the X party congress

At the 24 February meeting of party activists Lenin had stated that 'Moscow has broken all records in the discussions'. He argued that the emigre press was taking advantage of the struggles within the party, and against the background of disturbances in the streets he issued the stern warning that the period of discussion was drawing to a close:

We have given everybody a chance to speak their minds, we have carried out a discussion - and the congress will decide, and now we are at battle stations. We must unite and understand that one more step <sup>in the</sup> discussion and we are no longer a party.<sup>138</sup>

The vigour of the debate in the MPO had clearly shown that while pluralism might have been undermined in society at large it had found a refuge, if only temporarily, within the party organisation itself. Participation in the debates was accepted as one of the privileges of party membership, and was institutionalised, for example, by the practice of having a co-rapporteur at meetings. At the same time, however, there was a growing body of party legislation designed to enforce party discipline and to ensure the ability of delovoi action on the part of higher party bodies. The transition from military to economic priorities with the end of the civil war was marked initially by a flowering of debate, indicating that the war per se cannot be held responsible for limiting the discussion rights of party members, but the tendency to regard economic reconstruction as a military campaign provided the background to the undermining of the 'common law' rights of discussion.

There are several reasons why the discussions were so

138. Lenin PSS, vol.42, p.350.

intractable in Moscow. Here were concentrated the leading party, soviet and trade union activists and hence the debates in Moscow acted as a fulcrum for the debate in the country. Support in the MPO, the largest and most prestigious in the republic, acted as a powerful prop to any group in its attempts to influence party policy. The sharp reaction to the attempt by the Petrograd party organisation, in its address on the unions, to mobilise party organisations as a whole and not individuals in the party over specific questions was felt in Moscow by all sides as a threat to the very principle of free discussion in party organisations.

The objective reasons for strength of the oppositions in Moscow were based both on conditions in the city and in the MPO itself. The working class had decreased in size and its composition had changed, but the protest movement in 1920 - early 1921 made clear that it was not a negligible force and that in an inchoate way it retained a vision of socialism which was not identified entirely with Bolshevik power. Lenin's arguments on the declassing of the proletariat were more a way of avoiding this unpleasant truth than a real reflection of what remained, in Moscow at least, a substantial class. The economic and social conditions in the city were the bases for opposition activity. At the same time the political traditions of the MPO, with the emphasis on raion initiative and a weak centre, and widespread acceptance that discussion was a right and not a privilege, allowed the discussion full reign. The peculiarly Moscow grouping of Ignatovtsy bridged the two main strands of opposition activity, between the party and trade union discussions, and linked the demands for democracy in the party with those calling for greater initiative to be allowed for the working class. The

question can then legitimately be raised of what were the preconditions for greater worker self-activity? Would it not require a fundamental relaxation of party control over all of society? This was the logic of their position, as Lenin realised, but the oppositionists, no liberals, drew back from this conclusion and were thus condemned to the margins of history.

The very conditions that gave rise to the oppositions were also the cause of their defeat. The near Kronstadt in Moscow in February 1921 allowed the Leninist majority to claim that the existence of organised opposition allowed the 'petty-bourgeois' parties, above all the Mensheviks, to threaten the very existence of Soviet power in its Bolshevik form. Kronstadt itself, and its Moscow counterpart, provided the justification for Lenin and his supporters to 'put the lid' on the opposition. The X party congress made explicit what had become increasingly clear: that the real issue in the trade union debate was not the trade unions as such, but the leading role of the party in economic and political life; and that the issue in the party debate was the extent to which the party would become an organisation of a military type.

At the X party congress Lenin made clear the political consequences of his concept of the declassing of the proletariat. It encouraged, in his view, the growth of 'petty bourgeois anarchist tendencies' of the type of the Workers' Opposition.<sup>139</sup> Referring to the Kronstadt events he argued that

139. Lenin PSS, vol.43, p.42.



Here there appeared petty bourgeois, anarchist movements (stikhiya), with slogans in favour of free trade and always directed against the dictatorship of the proletariat. This mood has deeply taken hold of the proletariat. It has influenced the factories in Moscow, it has influenced factories in many places in the provinces. This petty bourgeois counter-revolution is undoubtedly more dangerous than Denikin, Yudenich and Kolchak taken together.<sup>140</sup>

The call for free trade was an assault against the cornerstone of war communist economic policy and this, Lenin insisted, had developed into a general attack on the dictatorship of the proletariat. In other words, in Lenin's view the development of independent 'speculationist' relations by the general economic crisis at the end of war communism was not only an economic category but also a political one and together they had provided the environment for the various oppositions. In this way the content of the opposition criticisms was devalued in favour of the emphasis on their witting or unwitting results.

Lenin expressed the conclusion that he drew from this in the words of the II congress of the III International: 'The dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible without the communist party'.<sup>141</sup> From this point of view he ridiculed Kollontai's and Shlyapnikov's arguments in favour of an all-Russian congress of producers in which the working class and its organisations would play the leading role.<sup>142</sup> The congress resolution on the trade unions emphasised the leading role of the party in the trade unions, but allowed that this should be of an ideological nature and not the minute regulation

140. Lenin PSS, vol.43, p.24.

141. Lenin PSS, vol.43, p.42.

142. Lenin PSS, vol.43, p.41.

typical of war communism.<sup>143</sup> The resolution on party building provided the true reflection of six months of debate. It outlined a broad programme of change in the party, based on the development of the organisational practices of the war period, which was to provide the basis for a crucial rassemblement of the party: 'We must once again gather up the party which during the period of the war was broken up into several groups'.<sup>144</sup> The verkhi and nizy, the military and civilian workers, the old and new party members, were to be fused into the greater body of the party, controlled by the party centre. The two supplementary resolutions 'On the unity of the party' banning factional activity on penalty of expulsion, and 'The syndicalist and anarchist deviation in our party', which castigated the Workers' Opposition, were commentaries on this basic programme.

In contrast to the heated debates on party and trade union policy, the adoption of the first measures of what came to be known as the New Economic Policy was accepted with little debate. As Lenin put it later, 'The change that we made in the spring of 1921... was necessitated by such extremely powerful and convincing circumstances that no debates or disagreements arose among us about it'.<sup>145</sup> It was a short step for Lenin at the congress to forge a link between economic concessions and increased party discipline:

...We require, on the one hand, the maximum unity, endurance and discipline within the proletarian party,

143. X s"ezd RKP, p.584.

144. X s"ezd RKP, p.563.

145. Lenin PSS, vol.45, pp.301-2. Speech to the Moscow soviet 20 November 1922.

and on the other hand, a whole range of economic...  
concessions.<sup>146</sup>

The introduction of the NEP altered the framework within which the debates had been conducted, but the issues raised by them remained in the forefront of the debates of the 1920s. The oppositions during the civil war were not merely ephemeral phenomena doomed to failure. The broad participation in them of large numbers of party members at all levels suggests that 'living thought' had not died out in the raions of Moscow either in the party or in the working class. The end of the war and the return of party members and workers to the factories signalled the possibility of a new era in party work. Instead, the oppositions were undermined, and their failure heralded a larger failure within the party as bureaucracy and administrative measures took the place of debate. The party and not the working class was henceforth to be the dominant force in the country and it was this formulation of the dictatorship of the proletariat that was to be the enduring result of the social changes and political responses of the period of war communism.

146. Lenin PSS, vol.43, p.31.

## CONCLUSION

The victors of October had come to power with with no detailed blueprint for the future communist society. Nevertheless, they did have some general principles developed over a half century of struggle with capitalism and reformism, and these general principles were applied to the practice of power during war communism. Many of the victors laid down their lives at the various fronts scattered over the vastness of Russia, but in Moscow, the heart of Russia and since March 1918 the heart of the revolution as well, their comrades had the unique opportunity to put their vision into practice. The war stimulated the implementation of the maximalist programme and in two and a half years of conflict some of the details of the future society were worked out in practice. By 1920 the victors not only of revolution but also of civil war and foreign intervention could survey a country devastated by war, a city depopulated, its factories barely working, its working class fractured and to a large extent hostile. And yet, capitalism and the bourgeoisie had been chased to the margins of economic and political life, victory had been achieved in the civil war, and the principles of war communism could in the large be claimed to have been successful.

By the end of the civil war all political life outside the communist party led a harried existence. Within the party not only had an organisational transformation taken place, but also an intellectual revolution. The relatively democratic internal organisation of the early period had by early 1920 given way to hierarchical command structures subordinate to committees which

were increasingly independent of their own party organisations. At the same time, while the intellectual life of the party during the civil war can be written as the history of oppositions, the period closed with the defeat of reform proposals and the discrediting of critical thought, if not of independent thought itself. How had this come about?

The answer lies in the very nature of war communism. The October revolution had been followed by the creation of what was intended to be a transitional state apparatus designed to eliminate bourgeois political power and to neutralise capitalist economic power. Against the background of the developing civil war in mid-1918 this state launched a second offensive against capital, no longer limited to neutralising its economic power but aimed at its elimination. Just as the capitalist state, according to Marx, was rooted in the economic system, so the socialist state developed both to counter the old economic system and to create a new one. In the city and the country as a whole a unique system was developed that in many respects survives to this day as the basis of Soviet-type systems.

In the economy during war communism capitalism and commodity relations were largely extirpated, and in their place a centralised system was instated which managed the whole economic life of the country through a proliferation of vertically organised pillars, the glavki. In this system the Moscow authorities lost the direct control over their own major industries and the Moscow soviet's economic management functions were undermined. The Moscow economic council became an executive body of the central economic apparatus. At the same time, the organisation of the economy reveals the limits of the 'party-

state monolith'. On the local level the party organisation and the party members working in enterprises were separated from economic management. Here the state, in its economic aspect at least, retained a certain relative autonomy from the local party organisations. In this field the party's functions were reduced to providing a favourable climate for the development of the economy. The party and its membership fulfilled an auxiliary function, and the party itself was threatened with militarisation at the height of war communism in 1920. It was this major breach in Bolshevik party hegemony that led to the party's decline when the state's economic functions expanded massively at the time of the 'socialist offensive' of the first five-year plans. The tension between the idea of the commune state and the dictatorship of the proletariat was not restricted to the opposition between the party-state and the working class, but also applied to the relationship between the party and state. Following October there had been no adequate integration between the Bolshevik political revolution and the new state's economic functions.

This deficiency was stamped on the new state's labour relations. Both the trade unions and the working class as a whole had by the end of war communism been reduced to an auxiliary role. But here their subalternity was a two-fold one: both in relation to the party and the state. The formation of state economic councils deprived the trade unions of direct economic management functions, and the later restrictions on collegiality only confirmed their subordinate role. Instead, the unions concentrated on labour and wages policy, and in enterprises the factory committees lost their control functions.

The lack of integration between the socialist democratic political revolution and the state socialist economic revolution was nowhere more starkly revealed than in the ending, for the committed workers organised in party cells, of 'syndicalist' forms of participation in running enterprises. During war communism the state and the workers' movement were fused but not integrated, as with the party's relationship with the state, and party was unable to bring the two together. Indeed, during the trade union debate the party's own political dominance prevented an integration of the labour movement and the workers' state.

The resurgence of the party after May 1918 as a body separate from the state was followed by a period in which the party consolidated its own internal organisation and at the same time extended its control over the political life of the city. The division of responsibilities between the state, concerned with the economy, and the party, as the source of supreme political authority, was internalised in the debates over localism and centralism, democracy and authoritarianism. In this system the party became the glavk of the political sphere.

The recruitment policies of the party reinforced the division between a group of activists and an increasingly malleable rank and file membership. Concern over the social pattern of recruitment and the debate over a broad or narrow party only emphasised the dominance of the party leadership in deciding these crucial questions. The alternating pattern of purge and recruitment campaign weakened the solidarity of the rank and file membership. The social context in which recruitment took place, the declassing of the proletariat and the growth of bureaucracy, allowed the traditional Leninist concept

of the vanguard party in the pre-revolutionary situation to be transferred and intensified in the post-revolutionary context.

The actual internal organisational developments in the party during war communism were provoked by an amalgam of theoretical and practical considerations. Just as Marx had provided only the broadest outlines of the future society, so Lenin had established only general principles concerning internal party organisation. On this question Lenin had little specific to say during the civil war other than stressing the need for discipline. The practical development of internal organisation took place within the general theoretical constraints of the functions of the ruling party in the dictatorship of the proletariat.

While Michels and Weber have provided important analyses of the internal development of bureaucratic organisations in general, the professionalisation of the Bolshevik party during the civil war took a hitherto unique form and developed in interaction with its role at that time. The functions of the party determined the forms of its bureaucratisation, and hence the context must be analysed in conjunction with the study of the normal departmentalisation within administrative bodies. A novel type of organisation was created by the fusion of the party's democratic traditions, the use of elections and accountability, and the development of the party's controlling functions.

It is over the role of the civil war in stimulating the changes in internal party organisation and in the consolidation of the state in general that the debate over the role of ideology and pragmatism, of theory and exogenous circumstances, is focused. The civil war was an ideological crusade against capitalism, but fought by pragmatic means, hence the pragmatism



was ideologically charged, and the ideology was to some extent restricted to what would be useful for prosecuting the war. The manner in which the war was fought and the absence of revolution on a world scale stimulated the emergence of authoritarian patterns. The party was able to retain control over the army, and they borrowed from each other certain organisational traits as the army was professionalised and the party militarised. But over the internal repressive apparatus the party's control was less secure. This was the second major area in which the party failed to establish its hegemony during the civil war, and for this the victors of October suffered during the socialist offensive.

In society and over mass bodies the party was more successful in establishing its dominance. During war communism not only intermediary bodies between the party as a whole and society, but between the party committees and society, were eliminated or bent to Bolshevik control. Groupings of party members beyond the aegis of the committees were discouraged and ultimately banned as the practice of democratic centralism in the ruling party was defined. The agitprop offensive kept Moscow's population and working class in a state of mobilisation, though its achievement was more to neutralise opposition than to win active support. The esurient party organisation and its committees absorbed or destroyed all intermediary aggregations between themselves and society.

By the end of the war, party committee control had been established not only over the soviets, but also over the party fractions working in them. The penalty for this was the etiolation of the soviets themselves as their mass participatory

character gave way to bureaucratic routine. The state bureaucracy controlled the whole life of the country, but the party itself felt threatened by the expanding bureaucratic apparatus. Hence once again the party committees insisted on the subordination to themselves of all party members working in the state apparatuses. During the civil war the party acted as the integrating force in the new bureaucracy, but even this role was lost for a time at the height of Stalinism.

The civil war saw the basis laid for the organisational supremacy of the party centres and of the 'thinking kernels', as Dunaevskii and the Workers' Opposition had put it. The dominance of the party centre relied on the supremacy of the party committees in the localities. A single standardised party was developing in which the rank and file party member in the cells and in the raions was losing the ability to influence the development of party policy. But before this new model party could be introduced it encountered the trial of a vigorous debate. While most of the oppositionists were willing to allow a great degree of centralisation, and even militarisation, during the war, and all agreed in Bolshevik supremacy to a greater or lesser degree, the approach of peace stimulated challenges to both the internal party developments and to the consolidation of the economic state which had undermined the labour movement. In particular, the oppositions sought to develop a relationship between the party committees and the membership which would combine effective central leadership without infringing local rights, and to establish a relationship between the state and the working class which, without denying the party's leading role, would allow greater worker participation as an organised class in

the management of the economy.

The oppositions from mid-1920 marked the last flare of a significant movement in favour of genuine reform in the party and against the bureaucratic consolidation of the state. The movements were undermined by internal inconsistencies and by mutual feuding, and by the circumstances in which they took place: international isolation, economic collapse and internal disorders. They threatened not so much the party's leading role in the new society, as the forms in which this leading role had been established during war communism. Their failure marked the wider failure in the transition to NEP. War communist political practices were intensified and the economic shift was not accompanied by significant changes in the wartime labour process. The economic state and the party bureaucracy were confirmed as the twin foci of socialist transformation, subordinating the social movement itself and even that segment organised in the party's lower organisations.

War communism was a combination of economic and political practice which saw the emergence of a radically new form of party-state. The Russian revolutionary movement's failure to provide a detailed concept of the institutional relationships in the new society, which could combine political democracy with the economic tasks of the revolution, or to provide an analysis of the role of the party in the new system, indeed the schematic approach to the political culture of the new state, was compensated during the civil war by a loyalty to the broader vision implemented by pragmatic experimentation. However, given the isolation of the socialist revolution in an industrially under-developed country, accompanied by civil war and foreign

intervention, the emerging political system became more suited for the negative task of destroying the old society than building the new one.

In early 1921 some of the harshest economic features of war communism were dismantled as the principle of gradualism, dropped in mid-1918, in the socialist economic development of the country was restored. The broad aims of the movement were not discarded, but only shelved, as the party-state adopted a strategy of seige rather than assault. The economic civil war was not over, only deferred. But in the political sphere no such concessions were made, and indeed the war communist internal party forms and relationships with mass bodies were consolidated.

War communism in the political sphere marked the emergence of a permanent pattern of political authority. It constituted a set of structures basic to communist rule in a country not so much backward as unreceptive to or unready for the implementation of their programme. How permanent the protagonists in war communism thought it would be is a more difficult question. If war communism was marked by the political supremacy of the party, Lenin during the NEP had no doubts that this should continue. As he put it in a speech to the Moscow soviet on 20 November 1922, 'This little nucleus [the party] has set itself the task of remaking everything, and it will do so'.<sup>1</sup> In regard to the state apparatus that had come into being since October 1917, Lenin was more critical. In the same speech, and in many others of this period, he stressed the need for the party to control the state machinery and not to succumb to what he saw as

1. Lenin PSS, vol.45, p.308.

its corruption. His distaste for the new state apparatus was revealed in his article 'On Cooperation' which talked of the need for a 'cultural revolution' and suggested that some of the state's petty economic functions could be better performed by the mass of the population organised in cooperatives. But even here he could not shed his dependency on the state even though he despised its poor performance.<sup>2</sup>

The problem was the long-standing one of analysing the nature of the twentieth century state. Already, Bukharin in his 'Imperialism and the World Economy' of 1915 had argued that Germany's war economy represented the fusion of national life into an all-powerful war machine. The modern state differed from previous ones in its colossal economic powers. At the same time, according to Bukharin, political and economic functions were fused in the modern bourgeois state. Therefore a new social formation had come into existence: state capitalism. The analysis was apposite, mutatis mutandis, for the new Soviet state. From this point of view, the state capitalist periods, as Lenin called them, preceding and succeeding war communism, do not differ radically from war communism itself. The common feature was the consolidation of the party's political power and, to varying degrees, the state's economic power. In the NEP Bukharin repudiated his war communist exaltation of the state, but Lenin was more cautious. Not only the war, but the Bolshevik definition of economic tasks, forced the concentration of economic power in the state and political power in the party.

The development of the party and the local state in Moscow

2. Lenin PSS, vol.45, p.376.

were determined by these general factors. The Moscow of 1921 was no longer recognisable as the one of 1917. Traditional Moscow had disappeared and nearly every institution had been transformed. The city was dominated by a pervasive bureaucratism. Control of industry had passed to the state, and society was organised as branches of the state or the party. Political power in the city belonged to the party committees, and in place of the multifarious raion-based democracy of 1917-18, the city's politics were concentrated in the centre. The October revolution had seen the coming to power of a new type of party, but it was during war communism that a new system emerged with a pattern of relationships that were to remain as the basis of the new society.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Population, births, deaths, and migration

	Average population	No. of births	No. of deaths	Natural change	Migration Net	%
1913	1,694,815	54,649	41,945	12,704	43,019	2.54
1914	1,754,900	54,373	40,741	13,632	46,453	2.65
1915	1,846,200	49,736	44,313	5,425	85,875	4.65
1916	1,940,200	44,402	44,576	-174	93,826	4.83
1917	1,882,400	36,308	43,924	-7,616	80,184	4.33
(Sept)						
1918	1,684,800	24,900	50,360	-25,460	-142,140	8.47
1919	1,415,600	24,564	64,316	-39,754	-229,446	16.21
1920	1,120,000	23,929	40,633	-16,704	-278,896	24.90
1921	1,176,600	36,111	30,055	6,056	50,544	4.30

Source: Statisticheskii spravochnik g. Moskvy i Moskovskoi gubernii, 1927g., M. 1928, pp.12-13.  
Migration column own calculations.

### Appendix 2

#### National composition of Moscow city, 1912 and 1920

Nationality	1912 %	1920 No.	%
Russian	95.2	870,916	84.8
Jewish	0.4	28,016	2.8
Polish	1.1	14,577	1.4
Latvian	0.2	9,302	0.9
German	1.3	6,014	0.6
Belorussian (in Russian total)		3,276	0.3
Ukrainian	0.2	2,335	0.2
Tatar	0.6	2,315	0.2
Armenian	0.2	2,048	0.2
Others	0.8	88,537	8.6
TOTAL	100	1,027,336	100

Source: Statisticheskii spravochnik, p.29.

### Appendix 3

#### Moscow city by age in 1917, 1918 and 1920

	30 Sept 1917		21 April 1918		28 August 1920	
	No.	per 10,000	No.	per 10,000	No.	per 10,000
0-4	119,998	647.1	110,601	644.6	62,473	608.1
5-9	144,067	776.9	135,145	787.5	84,135	819.0
10-14	165,233	981.0	148,750	866.8	91,707	892.6
15-19	251,826	1358.0	210,998	1229.6	106,152	1033.3
20-24	212,698	1147.0	202,923	1182.5	124,150	1208.5
25-29	199,853	1077.0	189,919	1106.7	118,714	1155.6
30-39	306,406	1652.3	295,097	1719.6	176,637	1716.4
40-49	223,018	1202.6	212,015	1235.5	130,814	1273.3
50-59	121,513	655.2	120,496	702.2	82,231	800.4
60 +	77,234	416.5	78,245	456.0	46,408	451.7
Unknown	32,580	175.7	11,835	69.0	3,915	38.1
TOTAL	1,854,426	10,000	1,716,022	10,000	1,027,366	10,000

Source: Statisticheskii spravochnik, pp.15, 30-31.

### Appendix 4

#### Sex structure and children

	Men		Women		Total	Women per 1000 men	Children under 10	
		No.	%				No.	per 1000
1912	877,688	740,012	45.74	1,617,700	843	255,969	158	
1917 (Sept)	919,728	934,698	50.40	1,854,426	1016	264,065	142	
1918 (May)	836,694	877,328	51.13	1,716,022	1046	245,746	143	
1920 (Aug)	498,077	529,259	51.51	1,027,336	1063	146,608	143	

Source: Statisticheskii spravochnik, p.24.



Appendix 5

Active population of Moscow city in 1918 and 1920

A. Manual workers

	1918		1920	
	No.	per 10,000	No.	per 10,000
Agriculture	1535	18	2469	38
Smelting	74	1	55	1
Metal	47694	564	33407	513
Wood	9685	115	3515	85
Paper	2531	30	721	11
Printing	11788	139	9335	143
Textiles	32266	381	10992	169
Tailoring	32182	380	23329	358
Leather	14260	169	8801	135
Food	14869	176	11514	177
Chemicals	9868	117	3819	59
Glass/porcelain	877	10	391	6
Construction	12696	150	10763	165
Railways	11091	131	18041	277
Tramways	5314	63	1471	23
Water supply	101	1	131	2
Local transport	21858	258	18500	284
Power workers	5686	67	2185	33
Other workers	71486	845	43959	675
TOTAL	305861	3615	205427	3154

B. Non-industrial professions

<u>Service workers</u>				
Hotels/restaurants	109677	1297	41308	634
Hospital staff	10837	128	5520	85
Personal servants	7964	94	-	-
TOTAL	128478	1519	46826	719
<u>Employees</u>				
Admin + law	14589	172	10741	165
Technical staff	15861	188	14695	226
C'mce, econ admin	43418	513	25264	388
Accountancy	30980	366	30733	472
Fixers	50959	602	58185	893
Nurses and health	21844	258	22557	346
Teachers	27033	320	16634	255
Police	21156	250	15402	237
Communications	9260	109	9140	140
Other employees	23327	276	20024	308
TOTAL	258427	3054	223375	3430

Appendix 5 (continued)

	1918		1920	
	No.	per 10000	No.	per 10000
<u>Liberal professions</u>				
Technicians, doctors and senior teachers	577	7	3402	52
Artists, lawyers	153	2	1604	25
Religious	4773	56	1119	17
TOTAL	5503	65	6125	94
<u>Bosses</u>				
With hired labour	32157	380	713	11
Independent	60816	719	30776	473
TOTAL	92973	1099	31489	484
<u>Family helps</u>				
a. on the land	no info		2259	35
b. in industry	-	-	745	11
c. in commerce	-	-	168	3
TOTAL	-	-	3172	49
<u>Other professions</u>				
Rentiers	8067	95	1769	27
Declassed groups	1416	17	422	7
Pensioned (state/admin)	10678	126	35202	540
Self-employment unknown	1308	15	10367	159
others	33384	395	87105	1337
TOTAL	54853	648	134865	2070
TOTAL EMPLOYED	846095	10000	651281	10000
UNEMPLOYED	89003			

Source: Statisticheskii ezhegodnik g. Moskvy i Moskovskoi gubernii, issue 2, 1914-1925, M. 1927, pp.52-53.

Appendix 6

Concentration of Moscow city workers in 1917

	1-50 workers		51-100 workers		101-500 workers		501-1000 workers		Over 1000 workers		Total	
	Ents.	No.	Ents.	No.	Ents.	No.	Ents.	No.	Ents.	No.	Ents.	No.
Textiles	86	2373	61	4337	75	16033	19	378	12	34326	253	84347
Metal	156	4003	60	4383	74	16511	9	6459	9	17853	308	49209
Food	36	958	15	1140	30	12469	7	5206	4	6507	92	19980
Animal products	42	1386	16	1206	20	4282	2	1560	1	8500	81	16934
Paper	130	3415	31	2267	27	5453	2	1332	1	1486	188	13930
Chemicals	29	758	12	903	17	3672	5	3631	1	2232	64	11196
Wood	32	812	13	872	9	1628	-	-	-	-	54	3312
Glass/ porcelain	11	390	6	435	2	271	1	550	-	-	20	1646
Others	2	86	1	80	1	360	-	-	-	-	4	526
TOTAL	524	14181	215	15623	252	54413	45	32026	28	70907	1064	187150

Source: Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, p.198.

Appendix 7

Industrial workers in active enterprises  
(A = city and guberniya, B = city alone)

		1913	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921
Textiles	A	252,316	242,815	249,469	173,876	112,746	104,601
	B	55,757	49,385	46,167	30,771	17,046	13,337
Metal	A	42,555	87,441	55,246	31,253	28,553	28,282
	B	22,693	56,927	31,354	21,085	18,804	16,252
Printing	A	13,558	15,407	15,634	12,609	12,707	14,338
	B	12,887	14,349	14,656	11,953	12,139	13,855
Wood	A	2,051	2,249	1,887	2,160	1,386	1,466
	B	1,786	1,964	1,677	1,981	1,229	1,194
Glass/ porcelain	A	17,393	9,088	5,814	3,275	1,755	9,499
	B	2,373	1,690	526	243	243	430
Chemicals	A	13,757	29,096	22,024	17,657	7,720	6,886
	B	12,388	24,220	18,832	16,473	7,002	6,732
Food	A	22,783	22,972	18,817	13,175	12,065	10,449
	B	22,714	22,856	18,585	13,110	11,984	10,397
Leather	A	3,669	5,191	3,489	3,252	2,638	3,755
	B	3,157	3,807	2,422	2,488	2,052	2,999
Power/ water	A	2,244	4,154	4,114	1,250	1,799	2,188
	B	1,444	1,514	1,514	956	1,003	1,404
Applied art/s'nce	A	1,501	2,578	1,897	1,088	1,040	895
	B	1,413	2,462	1,761	811	805	756
Clothing/ t'letries	A	12,037	27,752	18,464	16,338	15,287	17,470
	B	11,610	26,745	17,532	16,021	14,784	17,052
TOTAL	A	383,844	448,743	396,855	275,933	197,696	199,829
	B	148,212	205,919	155,026	115,962	87,091	84,408

Source: Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, p.171.

Appendix 8

The energy crisis in Moscow, 1913-1920

1. Fuel supply to Moscow (inc. railways, in 1000 poods):

	Donets coal	Moscow coal	Oil	Peat	Firewood
1913	54,336	150	22,732	4,442	84,380
1914	57,439	350	25,361	5,257	90,611
1915	31,500	1,000	22,000	2,800	96,048
1916	27,700	3,000	22,800	4,900	106,811
1917	23,400	5,700	23,200	4,800	122,564
1918	6,200	2,451	12,000	2,295	84,000
1919	1,500	2,750	4,000	1,180	94,000
1920	2,500	4,000	6,736	1,451	127,000

2. Fuel energy consumption in Moscow (inc. railways, in 1000 poods  
Donets coal equivalent taken at 7000 cal/kg, % in brackets)

1913	54,300(42.5)	100(-)	34,000(27)	2,100(1.5)	37,000(29)
1914	57,400(44.5)	200(-)	38,000(27.5)	2,500(2)	40,000(29)
1915	31,000(29)	600(0.5)	33,000(30.5)	1,300(1)	42,500(39)
1916	27,700(24)	1,800(2)	34,000(30)	2,300(2)	47,000(42)
1917	23,400(20)	3,400(3)	35,000(29.5)	2,300(2)	54,000(45.5)
1918	6,200(9.6)	1,100(2.4)	18,000(27.8)	1,000(1.5)	38,000(58.7)
1919	1,500(0.3)	1,240(3)	6,000(11.6)	550(1)	43,000(84.1)
1920	2,500(3.5)	1,800(2.9)	10,000(13.9)	670(0.9)	58,000(78.8)

Source: Byulleten' MSNKh, 9, 15 June 1921, p.9.

Appendix 9

Value of gross production for 1913-1921 in 1000s gold rubles on  
average prices for 1913

(City and guberniya above, city alone below)

	1913	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921
Minerals	18784 3555	9894 2395	6689 1519	2279 238	1087 73	459 61	2973 238
Metal	115898 57982	256431 171485	178675 124090	56266 35121	19132 13723	11960 8722	14502 9292
Wood	5457 5047	3885 3615	2902 2688	1683 1529	1808 1655	1021 882	1293 891
Chemicals	100954 93558	152531 131399	134723 115506	80301 70306	39407 37463	11569 10755	12881 12682
Food	188141 187619	140533 140080	92094 91953	55968 55840	33145 33008	32894 32595	41951 41534
Leather	14375 12921	19928 16872	13184 10267	6433 3696	4977 3808	3149 2449	4490 3631
Textiles	563599 143208	467302 115921	319642 76264	214507 49855	113138 21638	61359 10621	58023 18473
Clothes/ toiletry	18353 17,802	43314 41259	44026 42169	21512 20418	16913 16567	14782 14284	15307 14559
Paper/ p'graphy	24962 23614	21714 20471	22130 20727	16574 15491	7684 7281	2864 2723	3790 3712
Applied art/s'nce	2739 2446	2495 2117	2129 2069	1549 1417	964 781	1034 865	1104 964
Power/ water	14380 8990	27872 10508	26512 8935	14207 4825	2396 1833	3096 1726	9701 5610
TOTAL	1067642	1145899	842706	471279	240651	144187	166015
TOTAL	556742	656122	496207	258736	137830	85683	111586

Source: Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, p.172.

Appendix 10

Membership of Moscow city and guberniya trade unions, 1918-1921

Union	Mid- 1918 <sup>b</sup>	Early 1919 <sup>c</sup>	Sept 1919 <sup>d</sup>	Aug 1920 <sup>e</sup>	1 Jan 1921
Health	41,280	15,730	33,000	50,721	53,608
Water transport			6,100	6,230	5,216
Agriculture		9,195	30,000	13,000	20,000
Railways	25,000	21,866	118,000	118,000	110,837
Wood		3,280	2,800	3,528	5,078
Municipal workers		32,299	34,000	31,298	30,480
Leather workers	26,542	11,292	14,800	15,963	14,184
Metal <sup>a</sup>	48,830	44,820	30,000	50,000	59,745
Public feeding		12,699	13,850	15,093	16,780
Communications	7,285	17,000	20,000	17,849	17,881
Print workers	28,549	14,460	10,000	18,454	18,845
Culture/educ'n	4,860	3,637	10,000	25,765	31,000
Art		3,321	10,000	12,000	15,000
Food processing	4,888	22,022	15,000	15,930	19,119
Soviet workers			79,000	99,461	133,782
Construction	17,747	3,154	10,500	29,000	49,012
Glass/porcelain	1,448	1,100	8,000	15,620	10,089
Tobacco		4,000	3,700	3,003	3,152
Local transport		10,400	17,000	17,348	30,026
Textiles	61,840	145,173	171,600	101,682	88,995
Chemicals	41,712	24,600	25,000	15,664	19,564
Tailors	38,525	19,028	20,000	14,158	33,007
TOTAL	342,328	419,076	682,350	689,763	786,950
Other unions and unknown	213,336	220,602			
TOTAL	552,664	639,678			

Notes: (a) Excludes Kolomna. (b) The figures for the metal TU are for 1 out of 2 unions, for print 3 out of 4, and culture/education 3 of 5. The first total is for 44 unions, the second includes another 17 unions with a membership of 143,336 and about 67,000 in the unions for which information is lacking. (c) The first total is for 22 unions (2 unions each for agriculture and culture/education), and the print total excludes poligraphy. The second total is for 32 unions. (d) There were 2 unions apiece for health, art, and soviet workers, and 3 for the municipal workers. (e) Water and railway workers were in 1 union, as were the chemical, glass and porcelain workers until February 1921.

Sources: 1918 Statistika truda, 8-9, 1918, pp.19-21; Ignat'ev, p.367. Early 1919 Dva goda diktatury proletariata, pp.16, 22-3. September 1919 Obzor deyatel'nosti MGSPS, p.74. August 1920 KM, col.680. January 1921 Obzor deyatel'nosti MGSPS, p.69.

# Appendix 11

Wages in Moscow city 1913-1920, (average monthly wages in rubles)

	Ave for all inds	1913 as 100	Metal	Textiles	Food	Chemicals	Print
1913	28	100	36	27	22	22	35
1914	28	100	36	35	23	22	36
1915	33	118	38	26	32	27	39
1916	50	179	57	48	47	47	47
1917	153	546	143	157	169	137	153
1918 (I-IV)	306	1093	332	246	335	378	354
1918 (XII)	548	1957	608	502	506	592	606
1919 (I)	504	1800	442	-	-	-	650
1919 (X)	2451	8754	2426	1955	-	-	-
1919 (XI)	2174	7764	2313	1213	-	-	-
1919 (XII)	2348	8386	2556	1966	-	-	-
1920 (I)	2197	7846	2272	1705	2018	2011	3617
1920 (II)	2621	9361	2953	2077	2085	2346	3406
1920 (X)	9256	33057	10902	8756	5096	14564	8743
1920 (XI)	9454	33764	10902	6722	4504	14680	10376
1920 (XII)	11073	39546	13837	10462	6234	17473	10559
1921 (I)	7912			38748	28336	79423	30169
1921 (II)	9914						
1921 (III)	11230						

Source: Byulleten' statistiki truda Moskovskoi gubernii, MGSPS, 5-6, March-April 1921, pp.4-5;  
7-8, May-June 1921, p.1.



Appendix 12a

Market prices in Moscow city, 1913-1920 (in rubles)

	Rye bread (pood)	Flour (pood)	Potatoes (pood)	Cabbage (pood)	Sugar (pood)	Butter (pood)	Beef (pood)	Herring (100)	Eggs (100)	Salt (pood)
1913	1.05	0.98	0.40	1.04	5.12	18.00	7.56	5.96	2.91	0.30
1914	1.07	1.14	0.45	1.40	5.12	18.40	7.56	5.40	2.71	0.29
1915	1.43	1.80	0.45	1.83	6.75	20.86	8.76	7.70	2.87	0.66
1916 (I-III)	1.65	2.02	0.47	1.36	7.40	33.60	11.20	11.30	2.70	0.90
1916 (VI-IX)	1.65	2.00	0.58	4.24	8.05	42.80	18.40	21.10	5.00	0.90
1917 (I)	2.50	3.12	2.04	3.84	7.80	110.40	26.00	22.23	9.50	1.20
1917 (VII)	4.80	5.60	7.32	16.90	7.80	126.12	42.00	32.70	16.14	1.20
1918 (I)	80.00	60.00	24.00	10.80	160.00	400.00	114.00	73.00	29.00	0.80
1918 (VII)	340.00	350.00	83.20	32.40	710.00	758.80	316.80	174.00	104.30	4.80
1919 (I)	540	640	200	160	2400	3600	1080	1250	350	400
1919 (VII)	1885	2000	720	560	8000	8920	2828	4500	1370	1800
1920 (I)	7120	10000	2400	1560	54000	65000	13320	30000	7000	20000
1920 (II)	8000	10400	2880	2200	50000	79000	19000	51000	12500	24000
1920 (III)	11600	14000	3280	2280	62000	108000	21000	70000	12500	26000
1920 (IV)	10000	12000	3500	2280	84000	84000	22000	70000	20000	34000
1920 (V)	10400	14000	5000	2000	108000	82000	24800	80000	13000	34000
1920 (VI)	16000	19000	4800	1800	180000	108000	46000	95000	16000	42000
1920 (VII)	19000	22000	7200	2200	180000	120000	44000	95000	15000	48000
1920 (VIII)	20000	28000	8000	4800	160000	188000	51200	60000	21500	49000
1920 (IX)	18000	25000	7500	5500	180000	180000	48000	50000	19000	45000
1920 (X)	20000	20500	7600	4500	200000	230000	64000	85000	20000	48000
1920 (XI)	16000	24000	8100	6800	250000	250000	44000	100000	26000	52000
1920 (XII)	16000	28000	8200	6240	270000	290000	110000	225000	39000	52000

Source: Byulleten' statistiki truda Moskovskoi gubernii, MGSPS, 5-6, March-April 1921, pp.10-11.  
 For 1913-1915, and sometimes later, prices are given for the lower or medium quality goods as these were the most commonly used by Moscow workers. The prices in 1918-20 vary greatly depending on source used. The limitations on free exchange led to wild variation within even such a comparatively small area as Moscow.

Appendix 12b

Comparative market prices in Moscow city, 1913-1920 (1913 = 100)

	Rye bread (pood)	Flour (pood)	Potatoes (pood)	Cabbage (pood)	Sugar (pood)	Butter (pood)	Beef (pood)	Herring (100)	Eggs (100)	Salt (pood)
1913	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1914	101.9	116.3	112.5	134.6	100.0	102.2	100.0	90.6	93.1	96.6
1915	136.2	183.7	112.5	176.0	131.8	116.0	115.8	129.2	98.7	220.0
1916 (I-III)	157.1	206.5	129.0	130.8	146.4	186.7	148.2	161.7	92.8	305.0
1916 (VI-IX)	157.1	204.5	143.9	407.7	157.4	239.5	243.4	300.5	171.8	305.0
1917 (I)	238.1	319.0	506.2	369.2	152.5	617.8	343.0	318.4	326.5	406.8
1917 (VII)	457.1	572.6	1816.4	1625.0	152.5	705.8	555.6	467.9	554.6	-
1918 (I)	7619	6135	5955	1038	313	2238	1518	1045	997	271
1918 (VII)	32381	35787	20645	3115	13881	4246	4195	2490	3584	1600
1919 (I)	51427	65306	49628	15385	46921	20145	14021	20973	12027	-
1919 (VII)	179543	204082	178666	53846	156403	49916	374075	64396	47079	610169
1920 (I)	678000	1022000	595000	150000	1056000	364000	176000	429000	241000	6780000
1920 (VII)	1829000	2249000	178700	211000	3519000	672000	582000	1359000	515000	16271000
1920 (X)	1905000	2096000	1886000	432000	3910000	1287000	847000	1216000	687000	16271000
1920 (XI)	1524000	2454000	2010000	654000	4888000	1399000	582000	1431000	893000	17627000
1920 (XII)	1524000	2863000	2035000	600000	5279000	1623000	1435000	3220000	1340000	17627000

Source: Byulleten' statistiki truda Moskovskoi gubernii, MGSPS, 5-6, March-April 1921, pp.4-5.  
1918-19 figures rounded to nearest unit, 1920 figures rounded to nearest 1000.

Appendix 13

The Guzhon plant, 1913-1921

	O	U	U	T	P	U	T	PRODUCTIVITY PER WORKER						Tonnes of conv'l fuel equiv per tonne output				
								Weight		Value		Ave. cost			Average		By value	
								% of 13-14 Tonnes	% of 13-14	Pre-war rubles	% of 13-14	per tonne % of Rubles	% of 13-14		no of workers	By weight Tonnes	% of 13-14	Rubles
1913-14	79237	100	40.3	12933000	100	163	100	3683	21.0	100	3506	100	0.77					
1916-17	31921	40.3	6021100	46.6	189	115.9	3153	10.0	47.5	1910	54.4	1.51						
1917-18	21539	27.2	4407600	34.1	205	125.8	2685	8.0	38.1	1643	46.8	1.05						
1919	3965	5.0	863600	5.3	172	105.5	1611	2.5	11.9	424	12.0	1.62						
1920	1629	2.0	245700	2.0	151	92.6	875	2.0	9.5	281	8.0	1.83						
1921	3229	4.0	497000	3.8	154	94.5	1104	3.0	14.3	460	12.8	2.79						

Source: TsGAOR, 7952/3/210/37.

Appendix 14

Membership of Moscow party committee, 1917-March 1921

1A. Members of the MK elected at the I Moscow city party conference (3-4 April 1917): Andreev, Angarskii, Berzin, Bobrov, Golenko, Konstantinov (Orekhov), Maksimov, Ol'Minskii, Petin, Pyatnitskii, Rostovshchikov, Samoilova (Zemlyachka), Shternberg, Sol'ts, Vladimirskii, A. Zakharov, V. Zakharov, Zelenskii, Znamenskii, Zubkov, Sotsial-demokrat, 13 April 1917.

1B. On 6 April 1917 the MK elected an executive committee of five: Angarskii, Konstantinov, Samoilova, Sol'ts, Znamenskii, Sotsial-demokrat, 13 April 1917.

2. The 10 May 1917 city party conference ratified a committee of 25 members, 2 each from the 9 raions, and with the 7 elected at the conference. The 7 were: Inessa Armand, Bukharin, Lukin (Antonov), Ol'minskii, Popov, Sol'ts, Samoilova.

3. MK members in mid-1918 (incomplete): Al'perovich, Bogov, Bukharin, Il'ya, Fradkin (Boris Volin), Lomov, Lukin, Pokrovskii, Pronskii, Samoilova, Steklov, Radek, Skvortsov-Stepanov, Smirnov (P, 13 April, 7, 18, 23 July, 2 August 1918). Six members of the MK left for the front in early August 1918: Fradkin, Ivanov, Razshchikov, Ribe, Shillert, Znamenskii, (P, 8 August 1918). The MK bureau on 30 August 1918 consisted of Breslav, D.I. Efremov, T.F. Lyudvinskaya, A.F. Myasnikov, M.S. Ol'minskii, A.A. Sol'ts, V.M. Zagorskii, R.S. Zemlyachka, Dumova, p.97.

4. By late 1918 the MK included the following: Belen'kii, Chernyak, Dubinin, Dzenis, Efremov, Gerasimov, Godel', Kakhiani, Kasatkin, Khmel'nitskii, Kollontai, Kozlov, Kukuev, Lipitskii, Lomskii, Lyudvinskaya, Mitskevich, Mosolov, Osipov, Petrov, Poznanskii, Radek, Reinbakh, Rivlin, Rutman, Samarin, Savel'ev, Shevkov, Solov'ev, Svobodin, Titov, Tsivtsivadze, Ukhanov, Vladimirskii, Zagorskii, P, 1, 5, 15 October 1918.

5. The 25 March 1920 city party conference confirmed the 36 nominations from 12 raions to the MK: Amosov, Batyshev, Bel'yanov, Fidler, Ivanov, Korochkin, Kotov, Kozlov, Latsis, Lisitsyn, Moroz, Pyatnitskii, Rivlin, Rusakov, Sadovskii, Safronov, Shkirtyanov, Skobeinikov, Smirnov, Sokolov, Starosvetskii, Ter, Tsikhon, Ukhanov, Vasil'ev, Yurenev. Zimin. Myasnikov and Tsivtsivadze were coopted onto the committee, KT, 26 March 1920; P, 26 March 1920.

6A. The 21 May 1920 I Moscow guberniya conference elected a joint MK of 31 members for the city and guberniya: Alekseev, Belen'kii, Bubnov, Bunksh, Drozhzhin, Ivanov, Kamenev, Karpukhin, Kotov, Latsis, Lidak, Lisitsyn, Loginov, Minkov, Moroz, Mysnikov, Myshkin, Ostrovitinov, Polidorov, Pyatnitskii, Shkiryatov, Sokol'nikov, Sokolov, Sorin, Sorokin, Tsivtsivadze, Ukhanov, Uryvaev, Vyatkin, Zelenskii, Zimin, KT, 22 May 1920.

6B. The new MK met the same day (21 May) and elected a bureau of

7: Myasnikov (unanimously elected secretary), Zelenskii (20 votes), Ivanov (18), Minkov (18), Sorin (18), Pyatnitskii (17), Bubnov (13).

6C. Zelenskii acted as secretary during Myasnikov's absence on the Polish front, and Belen'kii (12) was an MK member during his absence, KT, 27 May 1920.

6D. An emergency session of the MK on 11 August 1920, attended by 30 people, considered a replacement for Zelenskii who had been appointed by the TsK to work in Narkomprod. Instead of electing a single secretary a secretariat of two was created, Minkov and Pyatnitskii. Because so many members of the bureau had been sent on duties to other parts of the country new elections were held: Belen'kii, Bubnov, Ivanov, Minkov, Pyatnitskii, Sorin, Zimin, KT, 12 August 1920.

7A. An MK of 39 members and 20 candidates was elected at the IV Moscow guberniya party conference (20-23 November 1920): Alekseev, Antselovich, Artem (Sergeev), Belen'kii, Boguslavskii, Bunksh, Detslenko, Dorofeev, Drozhzhin, Fonshenko, Giber, Ignatov, Kamenev, Korzinov, Kol'tsov, Kotov, Krinitskii, Lavrov, Loginov, Lyudvinskaya, Marchenko, Markin, Messing, Minkov, Novikov, Podbel'skii, Rastopchin, Sadovskii, Sakharov, Saprnov, Shkiryatov, Sokolov, Sorin, Sorokin, Uryvaev, Yakovleva, Zakharov, Zamorenov, Zelenskii. The candidates included Likhachev, S.N. Smidovich, Rafail, KT, 23 November 1920.

7B. The MK met on 24 November 1920 and elected a bureau of nine: Artem (secretary), Belen'kii, Dorofeev, Ignatov, Kamenev, Minkov, Rastopchin, Saprnov, Sorin, KT, 25 November 1920.

7C. At the end of December 1920 Artem was sent to work in the metalworkers' union TsK by the party TsK. V.N. Yakovleva was elected secretary to replace him.

7D. New elections were held to the MK on 25 January 1921 to reflect the changes over the trade union question: Belen'kii, Ignatov, Kamenev, Krinitskii, Rastopchin, Saprnov, Uryvaev, Yakovleva, Zelenskii, Otchet MK za yanvar' 1921g., M. 1921, p.5.

8A. An MK of 32 members and 10 candidates was elected at the V Moscow guberniya party conference (19-21 February 1921): Alekseev, Belen'kii, Boguslavskii, Bushber, Dorofeev, Kamenev, Kol'tsov, Kotov, Krinitskii, Kulikov, Loginov, Lozovskii, Marchenkov, Maslov, Messing, Minkov, Rastopchin, Rostovshchikov, Skobeinikov, Smirnov, Sokolov, Sorin, Sorokin, Tseitlin, Tsikhon, Tulyakov, Uryvaev, Yakovleva, Yudzevich, Zelenskii. The candidates were: Bessonov, Borisov, Mikhailov, Murav'ev, Rozenberg, Safronov, Pashentsev, Sevenov, Zamorenov, Zheltov, V Mosk. gubpartkonf, M. 1921, pp.41-2.

8B. The MK session of 22 February 1921 elected a bureau of 9 members and 3 candidates: Kamenev, Kol'tsov, Krinitskii, Lozovskii, Maslov, Smirnov, Sorin, Tulyakov, Yakovleva, and the candidates; Rastopchin, Zelenskii, Zheltov, KT, 24 February 1921.

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